

More time needed to start trial of war criminals

Says law minister

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Despite budget allocation and updating of relevant laws, the government cannot start immediately the trial of war criminals as the Home Minister Sahara Khatun could not join the office due to her illness.

She suffered waist injuries when she fell in the washroom of her official residence on June 29 and she is now in rest after undertaking treatment in Singapore, sources said.

Talking to The Daily Star on August 13, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said the

home ministry will appoint the investigators and then the law ministry will appoint the prosecutors and members of the tribunal for holding the trial.

He said names of some probable investigators were submitted to the home minister for scrutinising their profiles, but these were not finalised due to her illness.

So it cannot be said exactly how many days will be needed to complete the job, as it depends on the joining of the home minister to the office, he added.

Shafique said Tk 10 crore

has been allocated in the budget for holding the trial, and his ministry has been scrutinising the recommendations of the law commission on the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act 1973 under which the trial of war criminals will be held.

"We will only accept the law commission's recommendations on the technical points in the law, not all the recommendations," he added.

Shafique said the law commission has recommended bringing amendments to the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act 1973, saying that the

law should be amended with a view to holding the trial of war criminals as individual persons, not as auxiliary forces of the Pakistan army.

It also recommended constituting a comprehensive tribunal with more than one judge in Dhaka so that different benches can hold the trial under the unitary tribunal, he added.

Shafique said the commission also suggested inclusion of a provision in the law so that the government can appeal with the appellate court against the tribunal's verdict acquitting any criminal of charges.



Goods-laden trucks remain stranded at Firingee Bazar due to collapse of a ferry pontoon in the port city of Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

US sends Taiwan aircraft for typhoon rescue

AFP, Liukuei

The United States flew a cargo plane to Taiwan Sunday as China offered to send helicopters to help rescue more than 1,600 people still stranded a week after Typhoon Morakot struck the island.

As the massive operation to airlift people to safety from the devastated areas in southern Taiwan continued, President Ma Ying-jeou issued his second apology in as many days for the government's slow response.

"Sorry we were late," Ma told a community meeting in southern Pingtung county. "Still, we hope to get your life back to normal as soon as possible."

The official death toll stands at 124 but Ma has warned that the number could rise to more than 500, with hundreds feared buried beneath the rubble in the village of HsiaoLin alone.

After days of mounting criticism, the president convened his first national security meeting Friday and replaced Taiwan's head of emergency operations.

Helicopters criss-crossed mountainous regions in the south, airlifting survivors to safety as 41,000 troops fought raging rivers and crossed collapsed bridges to reach victims, many of whom have been without food for more than a week.

A new phase in the rescue operation began Sunday as troops shifted their focus from evacuations to searching remote areas for survivors and bodies, said Transport Minister Mao Chih-kuo, who is now leading the emergency response.

A total of 1,638 were waiting to be airlifted from 44 severely damaged villages as of Sunday night, Mao told a

news conference.

He said it could take up to six months to rebuild roads and bridges in typhoon-hit areas, making it hard for people to live in some remote villages in the meantime.

Those refusing to leave such areas may have to be removed by force, he said.

"One could hardly imagine the cost if those people continue to stay on the mountains and all of their daily needs have to be airlifted," he said.

A United States military C-130 transport aircraft carrying relief supplies landed outside the southern city of Tainan Sunday afternoon, arriving from an American airbase in Okinawa, Japan, the defence ministry said.

The US was also sending two heavy-lift military helicopters to Taiwan to help in evacuation efforts, Mao said.

The US flights marked the first US military deployment in Taiwan since 1979, when US troops based on the island left after Washington shifted its diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing.

And in a sign of warming relations with China, Beijing offered to provide helicopters, the Taipei-based United Daily News quoted Fan Liting, spokeswoman for China's

Taiwan Affairs Office, as saying.

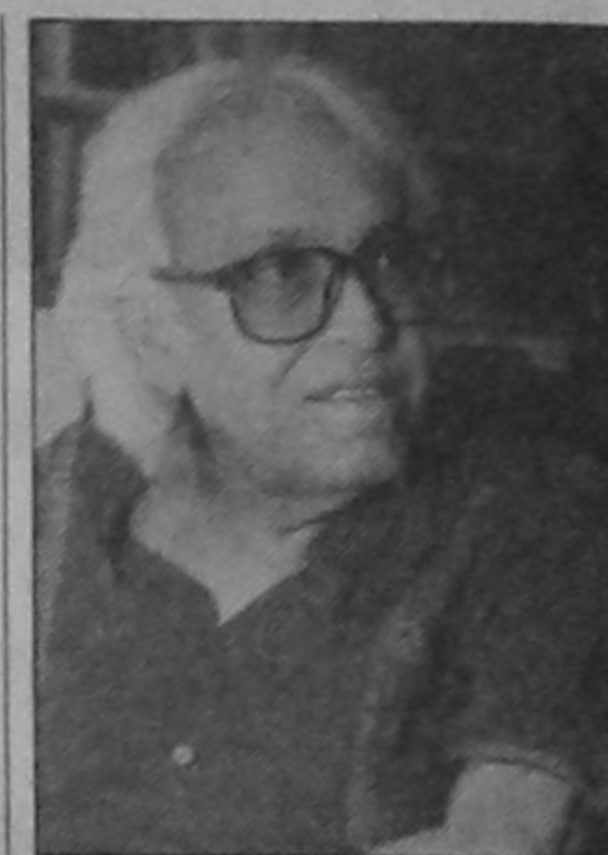
The offer would include Russian-made helicopters, currently the world's biggest, which Chinese rescuers used during last year's earthquake in China, the report said.

About 60 countries, the European Union and 19 international and non-governmental organisations have contributed money to relief efforts, the foreign ministry said.

The government said it also received 1.14 million US dollars worth of medical supplies from Singapore and water purifiers and high-speed water-transport equipment from Israel.

Representatives of the US Agency for International Development have arrived to assess what extra aid Taiwan may need. The EU will also send representatives to the island in the coming days for the same purpose.

Typhoon Morakot slammed into Taiwan on August 8, dumping more than three metres (120 inches) of rain that unleashed floods and mudslides which tore through houses and buildings, ripped up roads and smashed bridges.



Poet Shamsur Rahman's death anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the third death anniversary of poet Shamsur Rahman, says a press release.

Different socio-cultural organisations 'have' taken elaborate programmes to observe the day.

On the occasion, National Poetry Council and Shamsur Rahman Smriti Parishad will place wreaths at the grave of the poet at Banani at 10:00am and hold a memorial meeting at its central office at Aziz Market at Shahbagh in the city at 5:00pm. Special prayers will be offered at the house of the poet at Shyamoli in the city at 8:00pm.

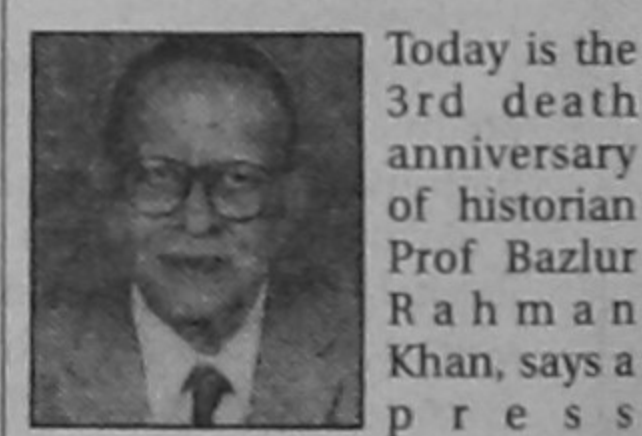
Admirers have been requested to attend the programmes.

Poet Shamsur Rahman, who was born on October 23, 1929 at Mahut Tuli in the city, also took part in various socio-cultural movements and played a vital role in critical moments of the nation.

The poet, who also served as the chief editor of the now-defunct Dainik Bangla, got a number of prestigious awards at home and abroad.

Prof Bazlur Rahman Khan

METRO DESK



Today is the 3rd death anniversary of historian Prof Bazlur Rahman Khan, says a press release.

A distinguished academic, Dr Khan served the department of history, archeology and international relations at Jahangirnagar University.

He authored many books and internationally acclaimed articles.

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

Ferdousi Begum

METRO DESK

Today is the 5th death anniversary of Ferdousi Begum, wife of renowned politician late Yusuf Ali Chowdhury (Mohan Mia) and the daughter of Pir Badshah Mia, says a press release.

On this occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at her Faridpur residence at Moez Manzil, Kamapur after Asr prayers. Quarkhwani and milad mahfil have been arranged at Faridpur Muslim Mission, Kanaipur Jame Masjid and Ferdousi Begum Hafezia Madrasa and Yatimkhana at Sadarpur. Quarkhwani and milad mahfil will also be held at Miftahul Ulum Sobhania Madrasa at Zigatola in Dhaka after Asr prayers.



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia inaugurates membership collection drive at the party's central office at Naya Paltan in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

BEPZA returns 35 godowns to food ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) yesterday returned 59.28 acres of lands in Chittagong with its 35 godowns to Food and Disaster Management Ministry.

With this hand over, the storage capacities of godowns in the country were raised by 35,000 metric tonnes with its existing capacities of 12 lakh metric tonnes.

BEPZA Executive Chairman Brig Gen Jamil Ahmed Khan handed over the documents of the lands at Halishahar of Chittagong to the Food and Disaster Management Secretary Mokslesur Rahman at the ministry.

The lands and godowns of the central store depot (CSD) in Chittagong were given to the BEPZA at a token price in 2006.

Food and Disaster Management Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque earlier sought assistance from the international donors to build more food stores in the country.

Earlier, the minister also said that the government would build three silos each with 50,000 tonnes rice storage capacity in Mongla, Chittagong and Postogola in Dhaka and also has a plan to repair 3,333 food warehouses across the country.

Kafi Sheikh nominated for MEJAB Award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Poet Mohammad Kafi Sheikh has been nominated for the Media Journalist Association of Bangladesh (MEJAB) Performance Award 2008 for his contribution to literature, says a press release.

The award giving ceremony will be held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city today.

Born in 1966, Kafi is an enlisted lyricist of Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television. He also wrote various articles and cover stories for journals and newspapers.

A banker by profession, Kafi has also won many awards.

Edn ministry to form body to fight graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The education ministry yesterday decided to form a committee headed by its additional secretary with a view to ensuring corruption-free working environment at the ministry and its different offices.

The decision was taken at a meeting at the secretariat with Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid in the chair. Education Secretary Syed Ataur Rahman was present.

It was decided that additional secretary (administration and finance) will supervise the activities of National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), while additional secretary (development) will look after the educational engineering directorate.

Joint secretary (audit and law) of the ministry will supervise the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE).

The joint secretaries concerned will take necessary steps to resist corruption and unnecessary delay in the activities of the respective departments, the meeting decided.

The meeting directed DSHE to take necessary steps to curb corruption in recruiting teachers at all non-government schools.

Earlier on August 11, the education minister warned all under his ministry of not resorting to corruption, saying that he will continue his battle against bribery and corruption in any activity of the ministry.

His announcement came following allegations of bribery and corruption in the distribution of MPOs (monthly pay orders) to education institutions.

Nahid requested to inform him about any allegations with proper evidence through his telephone number 7161395, fax number 7163322 and e-mail 'minister@moedu.gov.bd'.

78th birthday of Murtaza Basheer today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 78th birthday of renowned artist Murtaza Basheer, says a press release.

The artist has made immense contribution to the field of art and also added a new dimension to the abstract art through his works like 'Deyal', 'Epitaph for the Matters' and 'Dana'.

Murtaza Basheer also wrote novels, poetry, short stories and scripts. He actively took part in the Language Movement in 1952.

He won many awards, including Ekushey Padak, Shilpakala Academy Award and Sultan Gold Medal.

Another severed head found in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A severed head was found yesterday morning at a Kushtia village less than a week after police had recovered three severed heads from the district town.

Informed by the locals, police recovered the cut-off head wrapped in a polythene bag at about 8:00am lying beside the Kumarkhali-Kuthibari road near Choraikol village in Kumarkhali upazila.

The deceased could not be identified immediately. Police said they were searching for the body.

Earlier on August 10, three members of an outlawed organisation were beheaded allegedly by their rivals in Kushtia town. The bodies were recovered from Sonadangi village in sadar upazila.

Meanwhile, a suspected outlaw was killed at Gopalnagar village under Mujibnagar upazila in Meherpur yesterday.

The dead was identified as Moslem Uddin, 19, son of Alibuddin Hossain of the village.

Police said the assailants called Moslem out of his house over mobile phone at around 2:30am and hacked him taking to Gopalnagar High School.

On information, police recovered the truncated body of Moslem yesterday morning and sent it to Meherpur General Hospital for autopsy.

Moslem, who was involved with an outlawed party, might have been killed by his rivals over previous conflicts, police said.

15-day book fair on Bangabandhu begins in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 15-day book fair on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman began at Public Library in the city yesterday with a special offer of maximum 70 percent commission.

Bangladesh Writers' Foundation and Bangabandhu Lekhok Parishad jointly organised the fair with a view to representing Bangabandhu and his activities to the new generation.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique inaugurated the fair as the chief guest.

The VC said the fair would help the new generation know the real history of the country's liberation war and know about Bangabandhu and his contribution to the war.

"Organising such fair is imperative to rid the country of the distorted history as in the past couple of years, anti-liberation forces were involved in distorting our history, especially the role of Bangabandhu to build the country," he said.

Termining the fair well-timed, Prof Arefin also said Bangabandhu in his very short lifespan taught the countrymen the dream of liberation and finally he implemented the dream by achieving independence which is rare in the world's history.

Mizan Publishers would publish new books on Bangabandhu every day at the fair venue, said ANM Mizanur Rahman, chief executive of the publishing house.

"Readers could collect books with an offer of 35 to 70 percent commission," he added.

The fair venue would remain open to all from 1:00am to 8:00pm.



No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over all the six divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also likely to occur at places over the country, Met Office said.

It also said day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 7:30pm today and rises at 6:34am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 32.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and lowest 24.5 degrees Celsius at Rangamati and Feni.

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
Dhaka	31.1	26.0
Chittagong	31.2	26.0
Rajshahi	32.6	26.6
Khulna	31.5	26.1
Barisal	29.4	25.1
Sylhet	30.4	25.2
Cox's Bazar	32.0	25.8
	Morning	Evening
	90	79
	92	78
	90	96
	88	78
	97	93
	92	93
	78	80

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Matiur Rahman, former chairman of Gorla union under Sadar upazila in Thakurgaon, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital yesterday at the age of 55.

He left behind his wife and three children to mourn his death.

Local political leaders including former state minister for civil aviation and tourism Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir condoled the death.

He was buried at Natun Gorla Graveyard after Asr prayer.

Qulkhwani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Qulkhwani of Alhaj Advocate Khurshid Alam, former general secretary of Income Tax Bar will be held tomorrow, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the programme at his residence at 'Hasina Dream' at House No 49, Sher-e-Bangla Road in the city after Asr prayers and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Khurshid passed away on August 14 at city's LabAid hospital at the age of 53.

He left behind his wife, two daughters and one son to mourn his death.

PILKHANA CARNAGE

Court asks CID to submit probe report by Sept 30

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to submit its probe report by September 30 on Pilkhana carnage at Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) headquarters on February 25-26.

Metropolitan Magistrate Abdur Rahim passed the order as the investigation officer (IO) of the case failed to submit its probe report yesterday.

A total of 1889 BDR jawans and 27 civilians have been shown arrested for their alleged involvement with the incidents.

Meanwhile, jail authorities yesterday sent all the custody warrants of the detained BDR jawans to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) court where the magistrate concerned put his signature fixing the date for hearing of the case.

Sources said, the authorities could not produce 1916 BDR jawans and civilians arrested in connection with the Pilkhana carnage before the CMM of Dhaka due to security and accommodation reasons.

Earlier on April 2, the jail authorities produced 800 jawans and civilians before the court following an order of the CMM but trial proceedings of most of the courts remained suspended throughout the day due to security reasons.