

People united to beat poverty

Says minister

BSS, Rangpur

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister GM Quader has said that the present pro-people government has called upon all to forge a national unity in combating poverty and building a developed Bangladesh.

The people of the country have now become united under the leadership of the grand alliance government to fight hunger, poverty and all sorts of deprivation in making independence meaningful through eradicating poverty once for all, he said.

He said these at a huge

public rally titled 'Big Stand-Up' at Rangpur Zila School ground yesterday, organised by Rangpur district administration in observance of the International Poverty Alleviation Day.

Rawshan Ershad MP, convener of district Awami League (AL) Abul Mansur Ahmed, district JP president Moshir Rahman Ranga, senior leaders of different political parties including AL and Jatiya Party were present at the programme.

Hundreds of rallies with anti-poverty banners paraded the streets of the town before

joining the rally.

At 3:00pm, the observance began when the huge crowd stood up for a minute and put their hands together and vowed to eradicate poverty once for all by united efforts of the countrymen through a rock-solid national unity.

Later, a function that was organised at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka and the speeches of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was broadcast through Bangladesh Television on a big screen at the rally.

Convention of persons with disabilities tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 5th national convention of the persons with disabilities (PWDs) will be held in the city tomorrow with the theme 'Empowerment, participation and development'.

Some 2,000 persons with disabilities from 32 districts across the country will participate in the programme at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will formally inaugurate the event as the chief guest, while Social Welfare Minister Enamul Haque Mostafa Shahid and Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) President Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmed will be present as the special guests.

Action on Disability and Development (ADD), National Grassroots Disabled Peoples Organisation (NGDPO) and National Parishad of Women with Disabilities will jointly organise the programme aiming to draw the attention of the policy makers about amendment to Disability Welfare Act in line with the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Representatives of the three organisations said this at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday.

The other objectives of the convention include ensuring participation of PWDs in all decision-making levels and ensure their involvement in employment, education, health and entertainment programmes, they added.

ADD Deputy Capacity Building Coordinator Joychandra Karmaker and Deputy Programme Coordinator Ferdousi Begum and presidents of NGDPO and National Parishad of Women with Disabilities Akhter Hossain and Umme Kulsum Ranjana were present at the conference.

2 BCL leaders killed in Munshiganj road accident

UNB, Munshiganj

Two leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) were killed in a tragic road accident as a bus rammed their motorcycle on Dhaka-Maowa highway at Khanbari under Louhajang upazila in Munshiganj on Friday.

The deceased were identified as Taposh, 26, president of BCL Dhaka city ward no. 56 unit and Rajon, 25, joint-secretary of the same ward.

Police said the accident took place in the afternoon when a Dhaka-bound bus hit their motorcycle when they were going to Maowa, leaving them critically injured.

Taposh succumbed to his injuries on the way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital while Rajon died at the same hospital after admission.

Police seized the bus but its driver managed to flee. A case was filed in this connection.

RMG workers demand Tk 5,000 in minimum wage

UNB, Dhaka

Garment workers from a human chain here yesterday urged all concerned, including the government, to fix their minimum wage at Tk 5,000 per month.

"It's essential to fix our minimum wage at Tk 5,000 a month so that the families of 25 lakh garment workers may have two square meals a day," said president of National Garments Workers Federation (NGWF) Amirul Islam Amin.

The NGWF formed the hour-long human chain in front of the National Press Club at noon marking the International Poverty Alleviation Day.

NGWF central leaders M Faruk Khan, Sultana Aktar and Arju Ara, among others, joined the human chain.

Amin said the minimum wage of workers is only Tk 1,662 in the country now while the World Bank says that those earning Tk 4,200 a month are living below the poverty line.



A cross-section of people take a vow to work together to fight poverty and hungry at a programme organised by an anti-poverty platform of 16 citizens' organisations at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 3)

5 Rohingyas arrested, arms seized in Teknaf

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) jawans yesterday arrested five Rohingya smugglers from Myanmar from the river Naaf at Teknaf in Cox's Bazar and seized illegal arms from their possession.

Sources said BDR patrol team led by Company Commander Subedar Sirajul Islam of Shahpari Dwip Border Observation Post (BOP) seized an engine boat coming from Myanmar and arrested Myanmar citizens Lal Mohammad, 40, Abdur Rahman, 25, Ismail Hossain, 22, Abdul Mannan, 35, and Syed Alam, 32.

BDR jawans also seized a pipe gun, two cartridges, four sharp weapons and six buffaloes from the boat.

Operation Officer of Teknaf

12 Rifles Battalion Maj Abu

Naeem Khandker confirmed the arrest and seizure of the arms.

DU CSU ELECTION

DU student leaders meet Oct 20

DU CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of different student organisations of Dhaka University (DU) will sit together on October 20 to find out ways for holding the long-awaited election to Dhaka University Students' Union (DUCSU).

This was decided at a meeting at Madhu's Canteen yesterday.

Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) organised the meeting which was participated by senior leaders of DU unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), Bangladesh Chhatra Federation (BCF), Bangladesh Chhatra Moitree (BCM), Bangladesh Chhatra Kendra (BCK), JSD Chhatra League (JCL) and Bangladesh Chhatra Front (BCF).

"We had discussion on

overall situation on the campus and we agreed on one point that DUCSU election should be held to end criticism against present student politics," said Obaidul Haq Nasir, joint-convener of JCD DU unit.

"We, along with senior central leaders of all student bodies, will sit at DUCSU building on October 20 to find out the ways for holding the election," he added.

"In the next meeting we will decide our agendas and fix other tasks for holding the election," said BCU General Secretary Manabendra Deb.

"All active student bodies should take the issue seriously by ignoring partisan interests for the welfare of thousands of students," said Sajjad Saqib Badsha, general secretary of BCL DU unit.

The last election to DUCSU was held in 1990.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



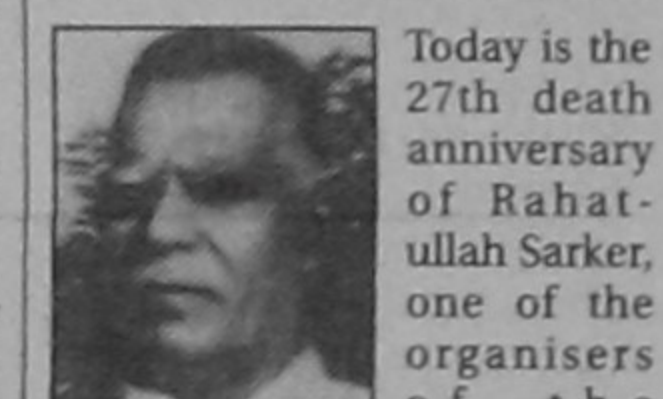
Md Shamsuddin, senior instructor (Music), Training Department, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, passed away due to diabetes and high blood pressure at a city hospital yesterday at the age of 51, says a press release.

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

He was buried at Azampur graveyard.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 27th death anniversary of Rahatullah Sarker, one of the organisers of the Liberation War and member of the provincial assembly of the then East Pakistan, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and Qurankhwani will be held at his village home at Parbatipur in Dinajpur. Food will also be distributed among the destitutes.

Dilruba Shiparin Joyanti

METRO DESK



Today is the second death anniversary of Dilruba Shiparin Joyanti, a former government official and member of Bangla Academy, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa and milad mahfil will be held at the residence of her husband Md Khairul Islam at 17 College Street, Dhanmondi after Maghrib prayers.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the milad.

Curb graft to get rid of poverty

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eradicate poverty.

Referring to opposition leader Khaleda Zia's absence from the rally, Finance Minister MA Muhiut said it was supposed to be a collective pledge against poverty. But the opposition's absence had weakened it to some extent, he said.

Hasina, also the leader of the House, launched a broadside against her political archrival Khaleda Zia for boycotting the rally.

The premier also criticised the previous BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government for "not working for people's welfare."

"She [Khaleda Zia] might not have liked the programme's theme 'national unity will prevent poverty'. She would have come here if it was 'loot property, get rich'," Hasina continued.

The prime minister also blasted BNP for boycotting the parliamentary proceedings over the issue of seating arrangement in the House.

She also called upon the opposition lawmakers to return to parliament and speak for the people.

"I am happy that the opposition lawmakers in parliament are attending standing committee meetings and joining teams to participate in international events abroad. I urge the opposition to come to parliament and speak for people."

On the much-talked issue of offering the opposition the post of deputy speaker, Hasina, also chief of ruling Awami League, said she wanted to do it but the opposition did not submit any

name for the post to the parliament secretariat.

"We waited for their proposal till the last moment. In fact they did not want to accept the offer," Hasina claimed.

Speaker Abdul Hamid said he was hurt by the absence of the opposition leader.

"The rally would have been a more meaningful one, had she joined it. I still hope both the government and the opposition will work together in future on all national issues including poverty alleviation," Hamid said.

Chief Whip Abdus Shahid, also co-chairman of the national committee on poverty, also criticised the opposition leader for "breaching promise to join the rally."

"She does not want to work for the country's development," Shahid added.

No opposition lawmakers or leaders joined the rally following Khaleda Zia's announcement on Friday that she would not take part in it.

But lawmakers and leaders of the ruling party and its associate organisations in large numbers joined the rally.

A few lawmakers and leaders of the components of ruling AL-led alliance were seen at the rally.

The premier pointed out the measures her government had taken in various sectors including agriculture, health and education for people's welfare.

Hasina said the BNP-led four party coalition govern-

ment scrapped some development projects taken by the previous AL government out of vindictiveness.

"We want to elevate Bangladesh to a developed country by 2020 as the next year will mark the golden jubilee of our independence," said Hasina, specifying her party's electoral pledge to have a hunger and poverty free Bangladesh by that time.

"Our aim is to provide security and welfare to the people. Some political parties might have other intentions," she said.

With an oblique reference to the Zia Orphanage Trust case, the premier said how the people who embezzled orphans' money could contribute to the nation's welfare and development.

Former premier Khaleda Zia is facing trial on charge of embezzling Tk 2 crore from the Zia Orphanage Trust.

Speaker Hamid said the programme was not a political one and the entire nation eagerly waited to see the two leaders on the same stage.

He said he finalised the programme after getting the opposition leader's approval.

"There is no alternative to national consensus," Hamid said.

He also hoped to see the two leaders together sometime in the future.

Sunil Shetty, global director of Millennium Development Goals, said Bangladesh has made commendable progress in many segments of the MDGs and has been an impressive performer compared with many South Asian countries.

JS team off to Switzerland to attend IPU confce

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A nine-member parliamentary delegation left for Switzerland last night to attend a conference of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to be held from October 19 to 21.

Chief Whip Abdus Shahid will lead the team at the conference. Speaker Abdul Hamid was scheduled to lead the team, but could not join the conference due to anti-poverty rally.

Other members of the delegation are Awami League lawmakers Sagufa Yasmin, Shamsur Rahman Sharif, Khan Thipui Sultan, Shubid Ali Bhuiyan, MA Mannan, ABM Anwarul Haque, Jatiya Party lawmaker Noor-e-Hasna Lily Chowdhury, and BNP lawmaker Ashifa Ashrafi Papiya.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Chittagong, Barisal and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:29pm today and rises at 6:58am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 33.9 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sathkira and lowest 23.7 degrees Celsius at Chuadanga.

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	33.0	24.5	72	75
Chittagong	31.0	24.0	90	80
Rajshahi	32.8	24.6	87	80
Khulna	33.0	25.0	80	75
Barisal	33.0	24.2	92	90
Sylhet	31.5	24.5	89	77
Cox's Bazar	33.0	26.6	76	83