



**Akhter Ahmed passes away**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Akhter Ahmed Khan, press minister of Bangladesh, passed away due to a cardiac arrest in Washington DC on Monday at the age of 54, says a press release.

He was also a former secretary general of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFU). He left behind his wife and a daughter and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

Akhter, who joined as the press minister in August, died at his apartment at Rockville in Maryland where he had been staying alone.

On Eid day, he had exchanged greetings with many of his acquaintances over phone. But he did not attend his office the next day. His colleagues then tried to contact him but failed.

Finally, Deputy chief of the embassy Sheikh Mohammad Belal went to the residence of Akhter but found the door locked from inside. Belal then informed the house owner who opened the door lock with a duplicate key only to find Akhter dead.

In separate condolence messages, President Zillur Rahman and Prime minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock at the death of the renowned journalist.

They said Akhter played an active role in democratic movements and establishing freedom of the press. The nation has lost a courageous and dedicated journalist in his untimely death.

They also conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad, State minister for LGRD Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Information Secretary Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury also condoled the death of Akhter.

In separate messages, Jatiya Press Club President Shawkat Mahmud and General Secretary Kamal Uddin Sabuj, Acting President of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFU) Kartik Chatterjee and Secretary General Altaf Mahmud, President of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) Shah Alamgir and General Secretary Omar Faruque, President of Federal Union of Newspaper Press Workers Fazle Imam and Secretary General Abul Hashem and Bangladesh Newspaper Karmachari Federation President Matiur Rahman Talukder and Secretary General Khairul Islam also expressed deep shock at the death of Akhter Ahmed Khan.

## CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

# 1.5cr people to be displaced in Bangladesh by 2050

Say environmentalists

UNB, Dhaka

About 15 million (1.5 crore) people in Bangladesh alone could be on the move by 2050 because of climate change, causing the worst migration in human history.

"They'll get displaced as temperatures are rising and desertification has set in where rainfall is needed most. They'll be on the move since more potent monsoons are making flood-prone areas worse," said AFM Shahidur Rahman, an environmentalist.

"They'll desert their homes because they'll find their villages under water due to sea-level rise caused by melting glaciers, and the slow and deadly seepage of saline water into their wells and fields," he added.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a minimum of 207 million people in Latin America, Asia and Africa will not have enough water inside a decade.

infrastructure.

Nearly 3.5 million people in Dhaka, about 40 percent of those live in slums. The World Bank estimates that by mid-century, half of all Bangladeshis will live in urban centers.

The next step in the migration pattern is across national borders.

Military experts predict a downward spiral of violence and conflict as people desperate for food, water and jobs cross into neighbouring countries where resources may be only slightly less scarce.

Wealthy nations like the United States and the European Union, meanwhile, could also be asked to take in millions of the world's displaced people even as they negotiate international disputes.

"Those people who are most vulnerable right now, and having a problem of just surviving, and having the normal development challenges of clean water, fighting disease, getting an education - those are the ones most

affected," said Koko Warner, head of Environmental Migration, Social Vulnerability and Adaptation Section at the UN University.

In Bangladesh, the issues are magnified by the density of the population. Any climate-induced disaster "inevitably affects millions of people," researcher James Pender wrote in a recent sweeping report on Bangladesh.

He estimated that by 2080, almost all the 51 million to 97 million people currently living in coastal zones might have to leave. The worst-off won't even be able to do that.

"If those who are causing the greenhouse gas emissions are unable to control carbon emissions, the people in the vulnerable areas, many of the coastal areas, are going to be inundated," said Shahidur.

"The vulnerable, the uneducated, the lowest of the communities will never be able to migrate to the US, to Canada, to Australia. There will be pressure on the not-so-vulnerable part of

Bangladesh."

Cities like Dhaka are bursting at the seams. Migration to other smaller cities appears to be occurring at a higher rate as well, though the government leaders are reluctant to acknowledge the reality.

The hardest hit, experts say, will be the families who won't be able to move. They are the ones most vulnerable to traffickers and others who prey upon the poorest of the poor. They are left to make do as best they can, say social scientists.

It is unclear how the government will feed, house or find enough clean water for vast numbers of climate refugees in a country of 150 million people crammed into an area of merely 55,500 square miles.

Experts think that Bangladesh should change cultivation practices to boost food security, plant large areas of forest in flood-prone areas along rivers and the coast, and build embankments to cope with the emerging problems.



People have started returning to the city after celebrating the holy Eid-ul-Azha with their near and dear ones at their village homes. The picture was taken from the Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday.

## Month of victory begins

**Freedom Fighters' Day observed**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The month of victory kicked off yesterday with different political and socio-cultural organisations observing December 1 as the Freedom Fighters' Day, say press releases.

The ruling Awami League has chalked out a series of programmes to observe the month-long countrywide Bijoy Utsab (victory festival).

On December 16, 1971, Bangladesh achieved its long-cherished victory over the Pakistani occupation forces on a declining winter afternoon after the nine blood-drenched months of the liberation war.

The trauma of nine months, the sacrifices of thirty lakh souls, the rape of two lakh women and the pillaging of villages and towns culminated in the final victory.

AL inaugurated the programmes after placing wreaths at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi. Later, the party leaders placed wreaths at Shikha Chirantan at Suhrawardy Udyana.

The associate bodies of the party will also hold discussions to observe the victory festival throughout the month. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will attend the programmes as the chief

guest.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) held a rally at the city's Muktaganj to mark the beginning of the month of victory.

Leaders at the rally said the present government has passed almost one year in power but is yet to start the trial of war criminals.

They demanded quick start of the trial and restoration of the constitution of 1972 to uphold the spirit of the liberation war.

CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim, Dhaka city unit General Secretary Ahsan Habib Lablu, Sajjad Zahir Chandran and Manabendra Dev, among others, spoke at the rally with central member Mahbub Alam in the chair.

Leaders of Workers Party of Bangladesh (WPB) placed wreaths at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard at Mirpur to mark the Freedom Fighters' Day.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), National Committee to Implement the Demands of Freedom Fighters and Observe the Freedom Fighters' Day, Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote and Joy Bangla Sangskritik Jote also observed the day by placing wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu, Shikha Chirantan and Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard.



Awami League leaders and activists take a vow to uphold the spirit of the liberation war as well as to try war criminals in front of Shikha Chirantan at Suhrawardy Udyana in the city yesterday. The party kicked off a month-long programme to observe the countrywide Bijoy Utsab (victory festival).

## LISBON TREATY

# 'EU to have more efficient ties with Dhaka'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Union (EU) will be more coherent and efficient in terms of development cooperation with Bangladesh, as the Treaty of Lisbon ratified by the EU members came into force yesterday.

"We are laying the foundation to have more efficient, effective and transparent relationship with Bangladesh in terms of poverty alleviation, emergency aid, climate change," Head of EU Delegation Ambassador Stefan Frowein said at a press briefing.

The Delegation of the

European Commission has also been renamed 'the Delegation of the European Union', whose external relations will be managed by the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security. The holder of this new post is British economist Baroness Catherine Ashton.

"The Treaty of Lisbon puts EU citizens at the centre of the European project. I'm delighted that we now have the right institutions to act and a period of stability, so that we can focus all our energy on delivering what

matters to our citizens," said EU President Jose Manuel Barroso in a statement.

The Treaty of Lisbon will ensure European citizens have their say in European affairs and see their fundamental rights set out in a charter. The EU will be better equipped to meet expectations in fields of energy, climate change, cross-border crime and immigration. It will be able to speak with a stronger voice on the international scene.

It will also provide diplomatic and consular protection for all EU citizens gradually

when travelling and living abroad, mutual assistance against natural or man-made catastrophe inside the union. The EU will take common actions to avoid asylum shopping, dealing with criminal gangs who smuggle people across frontiers.

Asked if the EU will have any intervention in bilateral trade issues with Bangladesh, Stefan Frowein said trade is a totally bilateral matter. But if any dispute arises, that will be settled under the WTO framework, he added.

Asked if the EU will have any common immigration policy tightening the rules for the non-EU citizens to travel or stay in the EU countries, Spanish embassy's deputy head Eduard Romero said until now there is no such policy yet. The EU member states can decide on such matters.

"However, once a non-European stays in any EU country, he or she comes under EU framework," he said.

Swedish Ambassador Britt Falkman Hagstrom also spoke at the press briefing.

## BANGABANDHU MURDER CASE

# SC judges to sign verdict soon

**Hopes law minister**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday hoped that the five judges of the Supreme Court (SC) would soon sign the judgement of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman assassin.

Swedish Ambassador Britt Falkman Hagstrom also spoke at the press briefing.

meeting with Attorney General Mahbubey Alam at his secretariat office in the afternoon.

Shafique said the review petition has to be filed within 30 days after getting the certified copy of the verdict.

He said the attorney general's office has appealed to the SC for a copy of the verdict in the case but has not got any copy yet, as the judgement was not signed by the judges till date.

He said the government would take steps for quick hearing on the review petition if it is filed after getting the certified copy.

Meanwhile, the attorney general told The Daily Star that he did not know whether judges have completed writing the judgement.

Barrister Abdullah Al Mamun, a lawyer for two convicted killers of Bangabandhu, said he is waiting for the certified copy for filing the review petition on behalf of his clients.

## 2 newborns found dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two unidentified newborn baby girls were found dead at two separate parts of the city yesterday.

Dakkhin Khan police recovered the body of one of the newborn babies in front of Shuvo Hotel at Ashoknagar in the area around 9:00am.

They found the body wrapped in a bag left lying there while another body was left lying at Nabobdor Housing at Adabor.

But the identities of the two newborn babies could not be ascertained.

Police sent both the bodies to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsies.

BUS HELPER KILLED

Meanwhile, a bus helper was also found dead inside a bus near Sayedabad bus terminal.

Sources said some unidentified criminals killed a bus helper and left the body inside the bus kept standing beside the terminal.

Identified as Joynal Abedin, 17, the victim was working as the helper of a bus which plies on the Sayedabad-Gazipur route. He was a resident of Matuail in Jatrabari.

Jatrabari police said they

recovered the body of Joynal from inside the bus around 9:00am and sent it to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

Quoting bus driver Robin, police said the driver parked the bus on the spot and left for home in the area around 11:00pm.

Robin came to the bus in the morning and found his helper dead.

Morgue sources said the body bore stab injury at its abdomen and the throat was tied with a piece of cloth.

However, police could not ascertain the cause behind the killing.



Dr Atiq Rahman, executive director of Bangladesh Centre of Advanced Studies (BCAS), and Wahida Sultana, director of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), sign a memorandum of understanding at BARI in Gazipur on November 12. Under the agreement, BCAS will carry out research on acceptability of BARI's dry and salt tolerant varieties among the farmers.

PHOTO: COURTESY