

Nation to get rid of stigma after trial of war criminals

Says revolutionary Binod Bihari Chowdhury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation will not get rid of stigma fully unless war criminals are punished, though trial of the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has partially relieved the nation of shame, said British-er revolutionary Binod Bihari Chowdhury yesterday.

family members, were executed on Thursday night. No other incidents than this execution could bring such happiness to us. It partially relieves us of stigma," added the living legend, who served almost an era in jail on charges of taking part in the anti-British movement.

The veteran rights hero, who was bullet hit in a war with the British on Jalalabad hill in Chittagong, also requested the government to erect a memorial on Jalalabad hill in honour of the supreme sacrifices made by 12 youths in the direct war in 1930.

"I request the prime minister to construct a Shaheed Minar on the Jalalabad hill so that our next generations could go there and feel that we are not cowards and are also not afraid of death."

"As long as we live, we will live like heroes, we will live bravely. We will resist injustice and the pledge we make today is that we will be at the service of people," the revolutionary said.

Revolutionary Binod Bihari Chowdhury Birth Centenary Celebration National Council organised the programme on the Central Shaheed Minar premises in the

afternoon marking the 100th birth anniversary of the revolutionary.

Mustari Saffi, wife of a martyr, said, "The nation rids itself of stigma partially with the execution of Bangabandhu's killers and it will get itself rid of the disgrace fully when the Razakars will be brought to justice."

"Binod Bihari had decided to sacrifice his life at a very tender age. The main target of his life was to do something for the country. He had tried to encourage us with the spirit of patriotism and I hope we will take lesson from his life," said Dr Anisuzzaman, who presided over the programme.

Binod Bihari took part in the war against British soldiers at the age of 16 years and played a vital role in the anti-British movement in this subcontinent.

Different organisations paid respects to the legend with bouquets of flowers. The organisations include Kochi Kanchar Mela, Khelaghar Ashar, Bangladesh Hindu Samaj Sangskar Committee, Hindu Kalyan Foundation, Sammilita Samajik Andolon and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad.

Fair probe into Kibria murder case demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday demanded impartial investigation into the murder of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria and exemplary punishment to the killers.

They also said the nation got rid of stigma through execution of the killers of Bangabandhu and that the killers of other political leaders, including Kibria, and war criminals would also be brought to book.

Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Parishad organised the discussion to mark the fifth death anniversary of SAMS Kibria at

the National Press Club in the city.

Awami League leader Tofail Ahmed said the previous BNP-led four-party alliance government tried to lead the Kibria murder case to a different course with an ill motive.

Kibria will remain alive in the hearts of people as a man of integrity and principle, he said.

AL leader Suranjit Sengupta said, "The initial victory in the war against a conspiracy to turn the country into a Pakistan has been achieved through execution of the killers of Bangabandhu. Now, the nation has more big tasks like the trial of war crimi-

nals and 12 others cases, including Kibria murder case."

Dr Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to the caretaker government, said the people would remember Kibria for his contribution to the liberation war and his outstanding skills in financial management.

Kibria, as a finance minister, took many initiatives to establish social justice in the country, he said.

Asma Kibria, wife of Kibria, urged all to launch a movement to ensure punishment to the real killers Asma Kibria.

Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Parishad president Ragib Ali presided over the discussion.

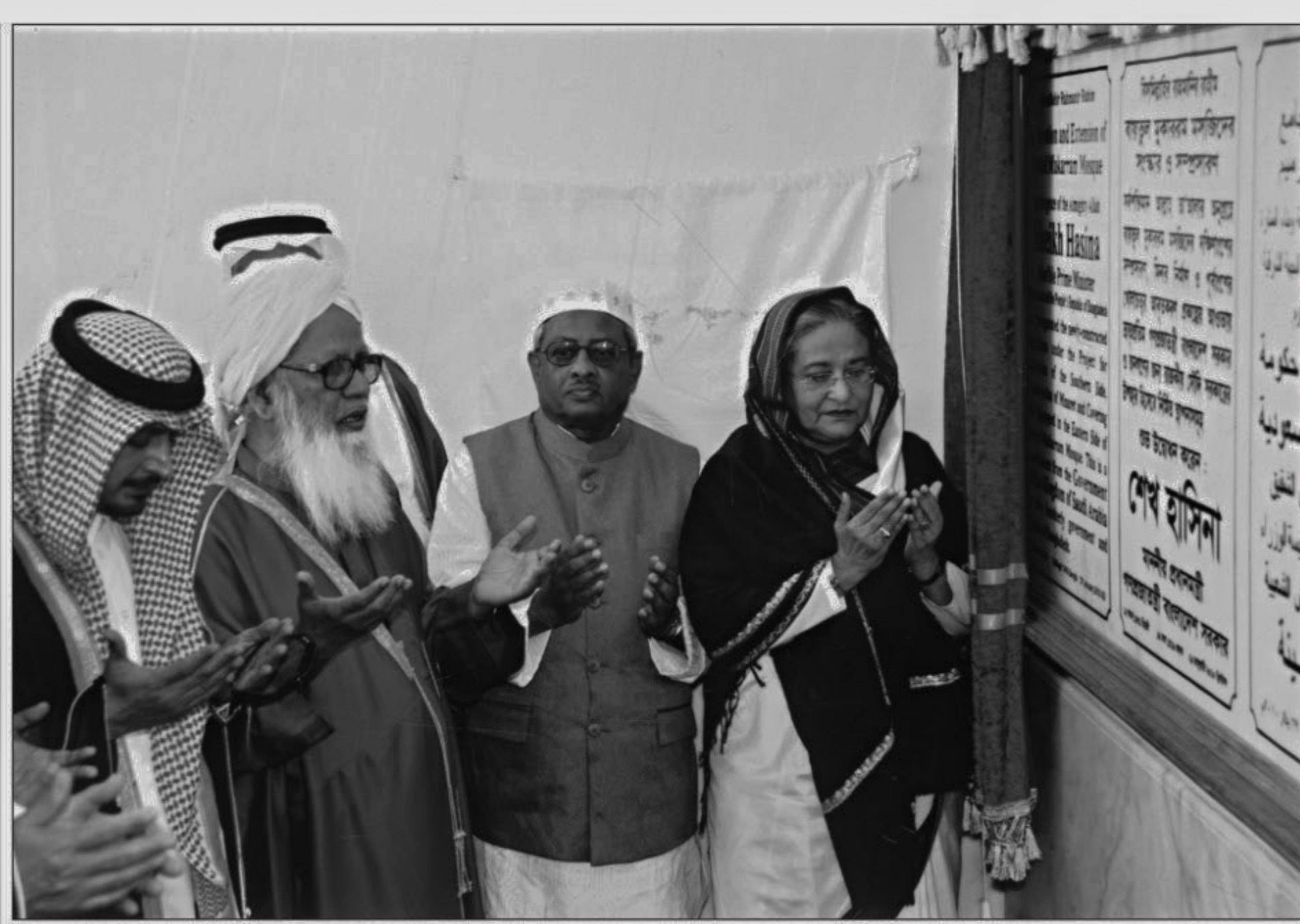
Rally at Korokdi today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Literary Resource Centre (BLRC) and Korokdi Samabesh Udjapan Committee will jointly organise a rally at Korokdi under Modhukhali upazila in Faridpur today to highlight its glorious history and cultural heritage.

BLRC Executive Director Prof Subrata Kumar Das said this at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday.

Justice Mohammad Golam Rabbani, Prof Mesbah Kamal, Bangladesh Film Archive Director General Dr Mohammad Jahangir Alam, Noakhali Science and Technology University Vice-chancellor Dr Sanjoy Adhikari, Prof Krishna Lahiri from India were present there.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina offers prayers after inaugurating the newly constructed structure and minaret of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the city yesterday.

Mosques to be made centre of dev activities: PM

UNB, Dhaka

The government wants to establish mosques across the country as centre of all pro-people development activities like Masjid-e-Nababi, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday.

She said this while inaugurating the newly-constructed structure and minaret of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque.

Hasina said there are one or more mosques in each village of the country and there are also Imams and muajjins in the mosques.

She said her government wants to utilise these mosques as centre for all pro-people development activities like Masjid-e-Nababi by relating with all activities of religious matters and human welfare.

She said the present government is implementing various mosque-based development works and will expand these programmes in the future.

She urged the Imams and muajjins to involve themselves more in eradicating poverty, malnutrition and illiteracy from society and improve environment as Bangladesh is a poor country and a certain level of the population is living below

the poverty line.

Hasina said the government had already approved mosque-based mass education projects worth Tk 643.55 crore to expand pre-primary education base utilising the infrastructures of mosques throughout the country. "With this, 38,000 imams and alems got employment and thousands of students are getting education in mosques," she said.

Until now, 24,383 libraries have been established across the country under the mosque-library project. New books have been distributed among 11,800 libraries and 5,100 steel lockers and bookshelves have been distributed to preserve the books. "Inshallah, this work will continue," she said.

The prime minister said Islam is a religion of peace. There is no room for hatred, vindictiveness and killing in this religion. "But it is a matter of sorrow that some people are trying to link this religion of peace with extremism," she said.

She called upon the Muslims and Islamic scholars to remain alert against such heinous mechanism. "Be alert, so none can mislead anyone by misinterpreting Islam," she said.

She said the government has taken steps to modernise the madrasa educa-

tion by incorporating various modern subjects in the madrasa curriculum.

"We have decided to give more importance to religious subjects in general education curriculum to enhance the sense of morality among students," Hasina said urging the Islamic scholars, imams and muajjins to help her government create mass awareness.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Mohammad Shahjahan Miah presided over the ceremony where Deputy Finance Minister of Saudi Arabia Muhammad Bin Saleh Al-Gifaili was present as special guest.

Earlier, Hasina formally inaugurated the newly-constructed structure and minaret by unveiling a plaque.

Saudi Arabia is providing Tk 2,706 lakh for the beautification, renovation and extension of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone of this project on February 25, 2000.

On completion of the construction work, around 20,000 additional devotees will be able to offer their prayers while 5,600 females will be able to do the same on the ground floor.

Execution of killers a sign of strengthening of secularism

Say ex-Indian envoys

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The execution of five killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should not be seen as an act of revenge but as a sign of justice against violence and the strengthening of secularism, two former Indian High commissioners to Bangladesh said.

"We should look at this development very positively as it shows the strengthening of former secularism," said former high commissioner Veena Sikri.

The development has been received 'very calmly' in Bangladesh, as there has not been any major demonstration against the execution, she added.

"This shows the political maturity of the people of Bangladesh, especially the youth who voted for Awami League," Sikri said.

She pointed out that bringing the killers of Bangabandhu to book was part of Awami League's election manifesto.

Deb Mukherjee, another former Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, said, "The execution should not be seen as a sign of revenge but as justice against violence. Mujib's entire family, including a ten-year-old child [Sheikh Russell], was killed in cold blood."



Prof Mozaffar Hossain speaks at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday organised by Bangladesh Literary Resource Centre (BLRC) and Korokdi Samabesh Udjapan Committee. On his right are Justice Ghulam Rabbani and Prof Mesbah Kamal.

Ananda Mohan College to be full-fledged varsity

Says education minister

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday said the present government will make Govt Ananda Mohan College a full-fledged university.

The government has also prepared the National Education Policy for all which could not be completed in the last 38 years, said the minister while addressing the inaugural session of the two-day centenary celebration of the college on its premises as the chief guest.

Nahid said the teachers have an important role to play in grooming the students as enlightened citizens by instilling in them the sense of patriotism and other values.

The venue turned into a huge gathering of the present students and alumni.

Ananda Mohan College was established in 1908 after the name Ananda Mohan Bose, the first wrangler of this sub-continent.

Acting principal of the college Prof Jahurul Haque presided over the inaugural function while State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Captain (ret'd) Mujibur Rahman Fakir, KM Khalid Babu MP, Mustaq Ahmed Ruhi MP, Prof Abdul Haque, Superintendent of Police (SP) Khandaker Golam Faruq, Dr Gazi Hasan Kamrul and Kazi Azad Jahan Shamim also spoke.

Later, thousands of present and former students brought out a colourful rally that paraded the main thoroughfares of the town.

The two-day programme includes discussions, seminar, documentary show and cultural functions.

Subcontractor commits suicide in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A subcontractor committed suicide at his Badda residence in the city early yesterday.

The victim was identified as Harun-ur-Rashid, 50. Sheer burden of loans and pressure from the lenders forced him to take his own life, his family members said.

Police said Harun incurred huge losses in his business.

He repaid loans to a number of lenders by selling all his assets, but could not pay back over Tk 6 lakh to some other lenders who had been putting pressure on him.

"Now we have no capacity to repay the money to the lenders as all of our assets have already been sold out," said Josna Begum, wife of the victim.

Harun left behind his wife and three young children.

Harun's son Mizanur Rahma told reporters at Dhaka Medical College morgue that his father left a suicide note mentioning the causes of his suicide.

Sub-Inspector Sikder Saiful Islam of Badda Police Station said they recovered the body in the morning.

An unnatural death case was filed in this connection.

ABANDONED TENGRATILA GAS FIELD Gas emission through different points go up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Gas emission through different points around the abandoned Tengratila Gas Field under Doarabazar upazila in Sunamganj went up in recent days.

Fire caught on such a leakage point in the house of one Emran Hossain on Thursday night. The fireball went up to about 7 feet, locals said. However, the locals extinguished the fire after about an hour.

Getting the information, Bapex sent a technical team from Sylhet to visit the spot yesterday. The team will visit the house and the Tengratila village today.

Bapex Managing Director Golam Martuza said gas leakage through points around any gas field area is not abnormal. But, people should remain

alert using firebox or any other source of fire, he said. Niko people had also been informed of Thursday's incident, the Bapex chief added.

Gas emission through points is very common in the villages around for years, a number of locals said. Even gas bubbles are easily seen on the ponds in Tengratila area, they added.

The Tengratila gas field suffered a huge blow out in January 7 in 2005.

When a Canadian company was drilling a well, it exploded with a big bang causing destruction to huge gas as well as it left a trail of devastation in the area during the following weeks.

The gas field suffered another severe blow out and huge fire on June 26 same year when the same company was drilling a relief well nearby to seal the first one.

AL implements political agenda thru' execution of killers

Says SQ Chy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

BNP standing committee member Salauddin Quader Chowdhury yesterday said the ruling Awami League had implemented its political agenda through execution of the verdict in Bangabandhu Murder Case.

He also demanded that the government bring the killers of his father to book the way the killers of Bangabandhu were tried.

On the issue of BNP's return to parliament, he said the party would go to the House when the government would create a congenial environment.

SQ Chowdhury said this while talking to reporters at the local circuit house before attending the biennial council of district BNP.

The BNP leader inaugurated the council.

Plan for tackling possible quake aftermath stressed

UNB, Dhaka

A comprehensive contingency plan involving all the relevant agencies and organisations such as the Police, Fire Brigade and Ministry of Health needs to be taken for effectively tackling the aftermath of any possible quake in Dhaka city, according to experts.

They said programmes like sensitisation sessions, drills and exercises targeting city dwellers should be taken to increase the general awareness of the public about the importance of preparing for a possible disaster, as this densely populated city is highly vulnerable to earthquake.

for ensuring the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) in the city to minimise earthquake havoc.

Dr Maksudur Rahman, an urban environmental management and planning researcher, told UNB that most of the concrete structures in the city have been built without maintaining the building code making those vulnerable to earthquake. "So, the authorities concerned should take steps to make sure the BNBC is followed in constructing new structures."

"It's true that we can't demolish all the buildings built without following the building code. But, we can save Dhaka city by demolishing the highly

vulnerable buildings and remodeling the less vulnerable ones," he said.

Stressing the importance of having adequate trained volunteers to provide assistance during disasters, Dr Maksudur said, "There's no alternative to having trained volunteers to quickly respond and work hand in hand with the civil defence people in case of any emergency, as Bangladesh has extremely limited resources."

Referring to the trail of destructions left by natural disasters taken place over the past few decades, he said the combined strength of the formal agencies and the armed forces looked too inadequate compared to the magnitude of the destructions and casualties.

Dr Maksudur, also chairman of the Geography and Environmental Science Department of Chittagong University, said decision-makers and planners may play a key role in formulating a contingency plan, seismic hazard maps and disseminating knowledge among school children, teachers and religious leaders for creating awareness about the danger of earthquake.

He also underscored the need for carrying out a media campaign through TV programmes and publishing advertisements in newspapers to raise awareness of the public about earthquake for their personal preparedness to save their lives and assets.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Syed Muzammel Hossain, former secretary of Bangladesh Film Censor Board, passed away yesterday at the age of 84.

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

He also served as secretary of Bangladesh Press Council. His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Khilgaon Chowdhury Para Matir Mashjid after Zohr prayers today.

WEATHER

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during late night till morning, Met Office said.

Prevailing mild cold wave over Rajshahi division and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Barisal, Faridpur, Tangail and Srimongal may continue.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:43pm today and rises at 6:40am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 30.2 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 7.0 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

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 | 27.5 | 14.8 | 59 | 37 |
| Chittagong | 27.6 | 14.8 | 60 | 58 |
| Rajshahi | 26.5 | 7.8 | 95 | 53 |
| Khulna | 26.8 | 11.5 | 69 | 58 |
| Barisal | 27.6 | 10.0 | 77 | 60 |
| Sylhet | 30.2 | 13.3 | 55 | 56 |
| Cox's Bazar | 30.0 | 17.2 | 53 | 56 |

TODAY

Lecture
Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Rajeev Mitter will deliver the 4th Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Lecture. Venue: Business Studies conference room, DU. Time: 11:00am.

Workshop
Department of Urban and Regional Planning organises a workshop on 'Participatory local level planning'. Venue: URP Building, Buet. Time: 2:55pm.

Debate
The inaugural ceremony of a two-day debate festival will be held. Venue: Shishu Academy. Time: 9:00am. National Debate Federation Bangladesh organises the event.

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