

DEROGATORY REMARKS Shawkat asked to appear before court on April 28

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked BNP chairperson's adviser Shawkat Mahmud to appear before it on April 28 on charge of making derogatory remarks against Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mehedi Hassan Talukder issued the order after hearing a case filed earlier in the morning with Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

Complainant Advocate Mohammad PK Abdur Rob accused Shawkat, also president of the National Press Club, of making comments against Bangabandhu and the prime minister at a BNP rally in Cox's Bazar on March 20.

Earlier on Thursday, Advocate Moshir Malek, president of Bangabandhu Foundation, filed a case against Shawkat with the same court for terming State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam "a Battalor Ukil". The court had asked him to appear before it on April 11 in this case.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 39th death anniversary of Khan-dakar Abu Taleb, a journalist and lawyer, says a press release.

He was killed by the occupation Pakistani Army during the War of Liberation on this day in 1971.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at his residence at House No # 13, Road No # 2, Block # B, Section # 10 at Mirpur in the city after Maghrib prayers today.

Relatives and admirers are requested to attend the doa and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Principal Ibrahim Kha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 32nd death anniversary of Principal Ibrahim Kha, an educationist, litterateur, and social worker, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankh-wani, discussion and essay writing competition will be held at Principal Ibrahim Kha University College in Tangail today.

A discussion and award giving ceremony will also be held at Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) auditorium at Farmgate in the city at 4:30pm on April 2.

Besides, a discussion will be held at Central Public Library in the city at 4:30pm on April 9 organised by Principal Ibrahim Kha Foundation.

Farah Amena Rashid

METRO DESK



Today is the tenth death anniversary of Farah Amena Rashid Faria, only daughter of Engineer Mamun Rashid of New Eskaton, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankh-wani, doa and milad mahfil will be held. Food will be distributed among the inmates of Wapda Orphanage at Motijheel in the city.

Robiul Hossain Kochi

METRO DESK

Today is the first death anniversary of Robiul Hossain Kochi, a freedom fighter and former chairman of Noakhali municipality, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankh-wani and milad mahfil will be held at Noakhali Zame Masjid and his house Majidkhatra.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the programmes and pray for salvation of his departed soul.

Qulkh-wani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Qulkh-wani of Moza ffar Hossain Khan, former chief engineer of Public Works Department,

will be held at Azad Mosque at Gulshan in the city after Asr prayers today, said a press release.

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



Trucks remain stranded at Chittagong port yesterday as workers of the port went on a strike demanding reinstatement of retrenched workers.

Textbooks' digital version less utilised

Experts suggest broad publicity to aware students

FARHANA URMEE

The first ever initiative to make sure that every student in primary and secondary level gets textbooks through a website still remains less utilised due to lack of awareness among the teachers, students and their guardians.

The contents of the textbooks under National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) were launched on its official website on January 4, 2010 for the first time in the country with a vision to take the education to a new horizon of progress.

A total of 139 textbooks of primary and secondary level are available on www.nctb.gov.bd.

By logging in the website, anyone can go through the textbooks and download them for free.

Furthermore, any students can get the books throughout of the year on the website from anywhere in case of losing any books.

Experts say it will help resolve the issues of textbook shortage and mismanagement in the distribution and stop their illegal publication and selling.

However, many teachers and students in the capital still know very little about the digital version of the textbooks.

Talking to Mamta Parveen, a lecturer of physics at Dhaka Residential Model School, the scenario became clearer.

She and her colleagues at the school said they first came to know about the initiative from the correspondent. However, they lauded it, saying it would help reduce the crisis of textbooks and its illegal selling at high prices.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nihad said unawareness about the first ever initiative of the country is not unusual, but initiatives would be taken to make it more familiar and widely used.

"The contents of the textbooks have been uploaded on the website to serve students and teachers better by taking the ultimate advantage of the modern technology," he said.

Besides, if any students cannot afford Internet access, they can be provided with the printed copy of the books after downloading from the website with the help of private efforts, said the minister.

He urged well off people and private organi-

sations of the country to come forward with their help for the poor students, saying the government alone cannot afford providing Internet service at every school right at this moment.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her speech also urged the well off people of the society to download and print out the textbooks for the students who have no Internet access.

Describing the initiative as a 'second line defence', educationist Dr Syed Manzoorul Islam said, "It has been launched for the students if somehow anyone miss the free books delivered by the government."

"Yet, broad publicity is required to make it familiar to the students and the teachers," he said, adding NCTB, secondary and higher secondary education boards can issue official letters to the schools asking them to inform their students about the service.

He also said, "Education ministry can advertise the service. Above all schools can also take initiatives to inform the students and their guardians about the virtual version of the textbooks."

On how to make it more pro-poor, he said,

the government alone cannot afford providing computers with Internet connectivity at every school around the country, so public-private partnership is essential here.

A number of ninth grade students at Udayan Madhyamik School in the city told the correspondent that they were aware of the website but they never visited it as they have already had the books in their hands.

Md Benajir Ahmed, headmaster of Mohammadpur Government High School, said though textbook crisis is very little, the digital version of the books will help the students get them easily at home and abroad.

Often schools fail to deliver all the textbooks on time due to various inadequacies, where the website might be a new option rather than buying the books at double price form markets, he added.

"My kid is fond of his computer. If he knows his textbooks are available in his machine, his study hours will definitely increase," said Maushumi Mansura, a mother of fourth grade student.

Raise voice to protect rivers

Matia asks water management officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday criticised water management officials for not raising voice against donor agencies' persuasion to build dams, which has resulted in drying of rivers in many cases.

"I've not seen any strong attempt among water management officials to fight the prescription of donor agencies. Nobody raised voices to protect rivers from drying by maintaining their normal flow."

Politicians do not stay in power for long but civil servants do, Matia said, adding: "But I have not heard any policy prepared by bureaucrats that focuses on protecting normal flow of rivers."

She said this at a seminar on 'Impact on agriculture due to climate change' organised by Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) at its office in the city.

Bangladesh Agriculture University Vice Chancellor Prof MA Sattar Mandal, Bangladesh Economic Association President Quazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad spoke at the programme with BUP Chairman Dr Mohammed Farshuddin in the chair.

Referring to rise in salinity in coastal regions, Matia said salinity could have been fought much if flow of sweet water can be increased from the upstream. But such scope is limited due to hindrances in normal flow of rivers in the upstream.

Water management officials had a mandate to work on keeping the rivers alive by maintaining flow of the rivers, she said, adding: "But they escaped their mandates and

agreed with whatever donor agencies prescribe for getting consultancy after retirement."

Referring to the issues of spread of arsenic in water, the minister also blamed donors and scientists for not raising their voices against unplanned establishment of irrigation pumps and shallow tubewells, which led to over mining of underground water and pushed arsenic level up.

"Nobody talked against over mining of underground water and suggested for harvesting rain water. I don't understand why do you surrender your creativity. No expertise can be developed by surrendering creativity."

Experts at the seminar said climate change would affect agriculture and livelihood in multifarious ways like reduction of arable fields due to recurrent floods, increasing draughts leading to a rise in irrigation costs, rise in salinity intrusion limiting cultivation of existing crops varieties.

To be adaptive to the impacts of climate change, Prof Abdus Sattar suggested developing climate change responsive varieties through strengthening agricultural research, investment in maintaining soil health and continuation of input subsidy and profit incentives for farmers.

"Increased investment in agricultural research and extension will be the main weapon to fight the impacts of climate change," he added.

The agriculture minister said the government wants to take preparation instead of being panicked.

"We will take preparation, fight and survive," she added.

VIQARUNNISA NOON SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

Two acting principals!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A stalemate is prevailing at Viqarunnisa Noon School and College as the institution is being run by two acting principals.

Though the teachers of the institution yesterday carried out their administrative duties as per the High Court (HC) directive, sources said the unwanted stalemate is disrupting the academic and administrative activities of the renowned institution severely.

Many teachers on condition of anonymity said Rokeya is the acting principal of the institution as per the court's directive and everybody should follow the directive.

The problem arose when the Governing Body of the institution allegedly removed the existing acting principal Rokeya Akter and gave the duty of acting principal to one of the teachers of the institution named Shailla Ahammed on March 25 ignoring the HC's directive.

Sources said the Governing Body recently decided to appoint a fulltime principal removing Rokeya whose tenure will be ended on February 2011.

They published an advertisement in the newspapers and announced March 27 the date for the interview for the post of principal, they said.

They also found around 250 teachers of the college gave a letter to the Governing Body requesting them not to remove Rokeya before ending her tenure.

In the meantime, Rokeya filed a writ petition with the HC and the HC on Thursday issued an injunction against the appointment in the institution for one month and fixed April 12 for next hearing.

The HC bench also issued a rule against the chairman of the school's Governing Body and the chairman of Dhaka Education Board asking them why the advertisement of the appointment should not be declared illegal.

But, the Governing Body removed Rokeya on Thursday ignoring the directive.

Against this backdrop, the administrative and academic activities are being disrupted severely as the institution is facing problem to form the examination committee for the upcoming Higher Secondary Certificate exams that commence on April 1.

Rokeya Akter was given the duty of acting principal on January 2008 and her tenure was extended in December on the same year because of her goodwill and efficiency, said teachers.

LANGUAGE CONTEST HELD

Call for proper use of Bangla

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bhasha Protijog, a Bangla language competition for school students, was held amid festivity at Azimpur Girls' High School in the city yesterday, jointly organised by the Prothom Alo and HSBC Limited.

This was a regional level competition. Some 750 students from different schools and colleges in Dhaka took part in the competition.

This competition was the last one at the regional level. The winners of all regional level contests will now take part in the national level competition.

Principal of Azimpur Girls' High School and College Hosne Ara Begum inaugurated the competition by releasing balloons in the morning.

Apart from a 30-minute test on language and literature, the daylong event featured a question-answer session where the young learners got an opportunity to enrich their knowledge of Bangla language and literature by asking various questions to academics and experts.

"In competitions, judges usually ask questions to the contestants, but in 'Bhasha Protijog' we, the students, ask questions to learned persons and get answers," said

Shaimul, a class eight student of Saint Joseph High School.

Eminent educationists, language experts and writers gave answers to the questions of the students at the programme.

Prof Rafiqul Islam, poet Nirmalendu Goon, writer Anisul Haq, Prof Shourav Sikdar, Prof Azizul Haque, HSBC official CM Sami Hafiz, tiger expert Khasru Chowdhury and Dr Soumitra Shekhar spoke at a discussion.

Prof Rafiqul Islam said, "Unesco fears that most languages in the world would become extinct at the end of the 21st century. Bangla is the fourth most widely spoken language in the world. But we ourselves have made Bangla language vulnerable through its inappropriate use."

He urged all to practise and promote proper use of Bangla.

Poet Nirmalendu Goon lauded the initiative to organise such a competition and said this event is helping raise awareness about Bangla among children and juveniles and build enthusiasm for literature.

Drug addict mistakenly kills trader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A trader met a tragic death early yesterday as an addicted youth mistakenly stabbed him in broad daylight at Lalbagh in the city.

Anwar Hossain, 32, owner of Moon Paint and Chemical at Moulavibazar of Old Dhaka, succumbed to his injuries at a Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

Locals claimed that addicted youth Imu, a resident of Abdul Aziz Lane of Lalbagh area, on Saturday noon entered into a nearby saloon to look for his tenant Sakib with whom he had previous enmity.

Sakib was having his shave at that time and Imu stayed there for a while and left the saloon, witnesses said.

A minute later, Imu again entered the saloon and picked up a scissor when Anwar was having his shave on the same chair where Sakib had been sitting and stabbed Anwar thinking as Sakib.

Anwar's face was covered with shaving foam when Imu stabbed him in the chest, they said adding that Imu immediately realised his mistake as Anwar screamed out.

Imu ran away from the spot saying that it was his mistake as Anwar was not his target.

Locals rushed Anwar to DMCH where he breathed his last around 2:00am yesterday.

Abdus Sattar, sister-in-law of Anwar, told The Daily Star that Imu and Anwar did not know each other and even they did not have any altercation inside the saloon.

Bula Mustafa passes away

METRO DESK

Bula Mustafa, a noted singer, passed away due to old age complications at her city residence on Saturday at the age of 63, says a press release.

Bula, wife of former director general of Radio Bangladesh Late MN Mustafa, left behind her daughter, son, a grandson and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn her death.

Her mortal remains have been kept at the mortuary of the Apollo hospitals Dhaka pending the return to Dhaka of her son from the USA.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Baitul Atique Central Jame Mosque at Baridhara Road No 8 after Zohr prayers today.

Her kulkhwani will be held at her residence after Maghrib prayers tomorrow.

Alhaj Faez Ahmad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alhaj Faez Ahmad, director of Sunnam Group of Companies, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at Chittagong Metropolitan Hospital yesterday at the age of 75, says a press release.

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

Jahura Haque

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jahura Haque, mother of joint secretary general of Jatiya Party-JP Jamilul Haque Bakul, passed away at her Uttara residence in the city yesterday at the age of 95.

She left behind three sons, four daughters, relatives and many well wishers to mourn her death, says a press release.

DHAKA TODAY Conference International Network of Alternative Financial Institutions (INAFI) Bangladesh organises a conference on 'Institutional support for migrant's enterprise development: Bank-MFI partnership'. Venue: Brac Centre Inn. Time: 9:30am. Fair The inaugural ceremony of the 8th National Furniture Fair 2010 will be held. Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. Time: 3:00pm. Congregation National Alliance of Disabled People's Organisation will organise the national congregation of the people with disabilities. Venue: Pallan Maidan. Time: 9:00am. Publication ceremony The publication ceremony of two illustrated books on the liberation war will be held. Venue: Hotel Lake Shore. Time: 10:45am. Discussion Manusher Jonno Foundation will hold a discussion titled 'One year of formulating Right to Information Act: Present scenario and future strategies'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 2:00pm.