



Call for equal opportunities for people with disabilities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of children, including those with disabilities and autism, took part in a cultural programme at Rabindra Sarobar at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday to mark the 12th National Disability Day.

The event was jointly organised by Disability Rights Group and the Jatiya Protibondhi Forum.

The people with disabilities still face discrimination in their everyday lives, speakers at the event said and called on the government to take steps so that they receive equal opportunities in education, workplaces and everywhere else in life.

They also stressed the need for initiatives to make it easier for children with

disabilities and autism to receive higher education like everyone else.

Speaking as a special guest, Secretary of the social welfare ministry Quomaran Nessa Khanam said the government would take initiatives to make the disability welfare act progressive and forward-looking, prioritising the needs of the people with disabilities.

She also gave assurance that steps would be taken to effectively implement various developments activities and projects initiated for the welfare of people with disability.

Noted jurist Barrister Amirul Islam and Barrister Tania Amir were also present at the event.

The Institute of Education and Research of Dhaka University also

marked the day with two-day elaborate programmes.

On the first day yesterday, a discussion was held at Shaheed Munier Chowdhury Auditorium of Teacher-Student Centre (TSC). DU Vice Chancellor Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique, Jatiya Protibondhi Forum President Khandokar Jahurul Islam, Sight Savers International Country Director Dr Wahidul Islam and Vice President of Inclusion Initiatives for Special Needs-Bangladesh Abuzzoha Noor spoke at the discussion.

Rallies, bulletin board launching and a film festival will be held on the DU campus today.

The first Wednesday of April is observed as the National Disability Day in the country.

Children with disabilities perform at a cultural programme at Rabindra Sarobar at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday to mark the 12th National Disability Day.

HC verdict in Hasina's power plant case Apr 13

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court will deliver judgment on April 13 on the petition filed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for quashing the proceedings of barge-mounted power plant corruption case against her.

The bench of Justice Md Shamsul Huda and Justice Abu Bakar Siddique yesterday fixed the date for verdict after completing the hearing on the petition.

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case with Tejjgaon police station on September 2, 2007, against Hasina and six others on charges of corruption in setting up of barge-mounted power plant in Khulna.

Upon the petition filed by Hasina, the HC on July 7, 2008, stayed the proceedings against her, and also issued a rule upon the ACC to explain why the proceedings of the case should not be quashed.

The final hearing on the petition was held yesterday at the HC.

Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh appeared for the petitioner, while advocate Khurshid Alam Khan argued for ACC.

Regional cooperation vital to fight climate change

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saarc should get dynamic to fight from the front the impacts of climate change affecting millions of South Asians, experts said at a discussion yesterday.

"Six hundred million people in South Asia earn only \$1 a day each. Climate change makes them even more vulnerable. So, it is imperative to form a special Saarc committee for their development," said State Minister for Environment and Forest Dr Hasan Mahmud as the chief guest.

The observations came ahead of the 16th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) Summit scheduled to be held in Bhutan on April 28-29 where climate change will figure prominently.

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) organised the discussion at its auditorium in the capital.

Climate change would cause more disasters like flood, drought and cyclones in the region, the state minister said, adding that the climate change issues must be dealt with regionally.

Many crucial issues in the region are dealt with bilaterally, whereas such issues are dealt with regionally in the cases of European Union or ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Mahmud said.

He said economic prosperity cannot be achieved without energy, but it is imperative that the region goes for green energy, which could be possible by generating hydroelectricity in huge amounts in Nepal and Bhutan. "But we are not addressing the issues."

Climate change expert Dr Ainun Nishat said South Asian nations, except India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, belong to the group of least developed countries and are very vulnerable to climate change effects.

There might be differences in demands among the countries, but they could surely benefit through cooperation in water and power issues, he said, adding that the region could get advanced technologies from the developed countries to generate solar energy in bulk amounts.

Saarc could think of how water flowing from the upstream in the region could be better used to generate hydroelectricity, he said.

Former ambassador Farooq Sobhan said Saarc needs strong monitoring and evaluation of its activities, and frame new strategies to energise them in the era of free trade and trans-border threats like terrorism.

Former diplomats CM Shafi Sami, QAMA Rahim and Muhammad Zamir, and BISS Director General Maj Gen Golam Mohammad also spoke at the discussion chaired by BISS Chairman Maj Gen Muhammad Firdaus Mian.

Govt to step up campaign against militancy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Home Shamsul Haq Tuku yesterday said his ministry would ask the deputy commissioners, superintendents of police, Upazila Nirbahi Officers and local elected representatives to keep carrying out the government's socio-political campaign in their respective areas to check extremism.

They will be asked to intensify anti-extremism campaign, particularly in educational and religious institutions, he told reporters after a meeting of the Jatiya Jangi Protirodh and Protikar Committee (National committee to resist extremists and address the issue) at the home ministry.

The education ministry will be asked to send letters to all

the educational institutions across the country to carry out such campaign, he added.

Besides, the inspector general of police and director general of Islamic Foundation have been asked to conduct such campaign in the capital to check extremism, Tuku said, adding that the Islamic Foundation would ask the imams at every mosque across the country to make the people aware about the negative impacts of extremism before Khutba during Juma prayers.

Everyone, including the law enforcement agencies, should remain alert ahead of the war crimes trials as the war criminals can do anything anytime, he added.

A home ministry official said they would soon prepare a budget to conduct the anti-militancy campaign.

Pakistan High Commission clarifies report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Pakistan High Commission (HC) in Dhaka yesterday clarified a report on the meeting of the Pakistan high commissioner with the law minister published in different newspapers, which says a "change in Pakistan's position on war crimes trial."

Pakistan High Commissioner Ashraf Qureshi called on Law Minister Shafique Ahmed at his secretary office on Tuesday. The report which was published yesterday was made quoting the law minister.

The Pakistan High Commission in a press release said, "The High Commission of Pakistan wishes to dispel this erroneous impression which is contrary to the facts. It has always been a consistent stance of Pakistan that the war crimes trial is an internal matter of Bangladesh as it only relates to the Bangladeshi nationals."

"The government of Pakistan is satisfied at the remarks of the foreign minister of Bangladesh that Bangladesh would try its own citizens involved in war crimes and that the government-planned trial of war criminals would not, by any means, affect Bangladesh's bilateral relations with Pakistan," it added.

Asked about the Pakistan HC's statement, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday told The Daily Star that the High Commission has made it very clear that Pakistan will not interfere in the Bangladesh government's move to try the war criminals of this country.

In February, the Pakistan high commissioner created confusion about their position with regard to the trial of war criminals by saying that the issue of war criminals between Dhaka and Islamabad had been resolved in 1974 through signing a tripartite agreement among Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, said the law minister.

He also said their previous statement was confusing, but their recent statement shows a change in their position regarding the trial of war criminals.

The government, however, will not try the Pakistani prisoners of war, the law minister added.

17 Shibir activists arrested in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police on Tuesday night arrested 17 activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir from an apartment in the city's Pallabi area on suspicion of planning for devastating acts.

Sub-Inspector Firoz Hossain Molla of Pallabi Police Station produced them before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court seeking remand while the court ordered them to be sent to jail.

The detainees prayed for bail, but the court rejected the bail prayer.

Officer-in-Charge of Pallabi Police Station Iqbal Hossain said they conducted the raid at about 9:00pm after receiving information that the Shibir activists were holding a meeting for creating chaos in the city.

The arrestees might have links with the killing of the Bangladesh Chhatra League leader in Rajshahi University, SI Firoz said.

LabAid comes to aid of Nirmal Sen

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

LabAid Hospital has taken responsibility for the treatment of ailing veteran journalist and columnist Nirmal Sen.

LabAid Media Coordinator Mesbah Azad took Nirmal Sen to Dhaka from his village home at Dighirpar in Kotalipara yesterday.

He said, "Newspaper reports on his physical condition drew the attention of LabAid authority. A three-member medical board led by neurologist Prof Serajul Haque has also been formed. He will be under the care of LabAid until he recovers."

Kangkar Sen, nephew of Nirmal Sen, said the veteran journalist suffered a brain stroke in 2003. He was taken to Singapore for treatment, but he was brought back home three months later due to financial constraints.

Later, he underwent treatment at Savar CRP for eight months.

But his further treatment could not continue due to financial constraints, he added.

NEWS IN BRIEF

BCS exam application deadline

BSS, Dhaka

Application forms for the 30th BCS examinations can be submitted from April 11 to 20 to the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (PSC), an official release said.

The application will be received at the newly constructed building of the PSC at plots 27 and 29 Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar under the supervision of the deputy commissioner of Dhaka.

Fire at BIWTA ship

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Furniture and other valuables of Sandhani, a ship of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), were burnt in a fire at Matlaghat adjacent to the district launch terminal yesterday noon.

The fire originated from an electrical short circuit. Fire fighters doused the fire after an hour-long effort.

Land minister's sudden visit to land office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Land Minister Rezaul Karim Hira made a sudden visit to the office of the Assistant Commissioner (Land) at Kotowali yesterday.

The minister asked people about the services they were getting from the land office and directed the officials concerned not to keep any works pending.

He also directed the officials to behave themselves with the people coming to the land office.

Two German lawmakers in city

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Two members of the German Parliament (Bundestag) arrived here yesterday on a weeklong visit to Bangladesh to catch up on the recent developments in Bangladesh and to foster ties between the German Bundestag and the Jatiya Sangsad.

The German MPs Jürgen Klimke (CDU) and Niemat Movassat (Die LINKE) represent the committees on Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation and Human Rights of the German Bundestag.

During their stay in Bangladesh, the German lawmakers will meet Speaker Abdur Hamid, Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and ministers of commerce, health and family welfare, Chittagong Hill Tracts affairs, energy and environment to review the state of the bilateral cooperation in these fields.

The German parliamentarians are also scheduled to meet members of the Bangladesh German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, representatives of the civil society and the Most Reverend Paulinus Costa, Arch Bishop of Dhaka.

2 schoolboys drown in water body in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two schoolboys drowned in a jheel (lake) at Palashnagar in Pallabi in the city yesterday.

The dead were identified as Mohammad Suman, 8, and Momin, 10. Both the children were students of a school in Sabuj Bangla colony in Mirpur-11. Details about them could not be known immediately.

Fire brigade sources said Suman and Momin drowned after they along with their friend Mamun went to take a bath in the lake at around 11:00am. Mamun, however, managed to swim ashore.

Receiving information from Mamun, local people tried to rescue the boys, but to no avail. Later, they informed the fire brigade at 12:35pm. A team of four divers recovered the bodies after struggling for about one hour.

Listed criminal held

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Detectives arrested an alleged notorious criminal of the city's Rampura area from his hideout at a bordering village in Sharsha, Jessore, yesterday evening.

The arrestee, Shahjada alias Saju, is an accused in at least 19 cases filed with different police stations in the city. He had been staying in village Samridhdha Kathi for the last several months to evade capture.

A team of detective branch of police picked up Shahjada at around 7:00pm from the house of one Pintu.

DB officials said they caught the listed criminal on secret information.

Shahjada, 28, is the ringleader of a criminal gang involved in extortion, tender manipulation and in illegal business of garments wastage, the police said.

He was being taken to Dhaka, the DB officials said.

Shah Alam must face

FROM PAGE 1

links to the murder of Dhaka City Corporation councillor Ahmed Hossain.

The bench of justices AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Hanik and Md Delwar Hossain also directed the government not to harass or arrest Shah Alam without due legal procedure.

It ordered police not to ask the Bashundhara Group chairman any question to incriminate him.

Shah Alam filed the writ petition on Tuesday challenging the notice of the Detective Branch of police that asked him to appear before the investigators at its Minto Road office.

The attorney general gave assurance that police would not harass Shah Alam during interrogation.

Giving an example, he said the DB police last year did not harass barrister Abdur Razzaq during questioning in a case filed in connection with the massacre at the BDR headquarters.

On April 5, the HC rejected a writ petition from Shah

General Murad Reza said it will be a bad precedence, if the HC allows presence of a petitioner's counsel during interrogation. It will encourage other accused to seek such directives from the HC.

Petitioner's counsel Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh told the court that the DB police summoned his client to appear before the investigators to harass him.

Taposh said his client's name was not mentioned in the first information report of the case but police unlawfully issued the notice asking him to appear before them.

He prayed for staying the operation of the notice and issuance of a rule upon the government.

Ruhul Amin, an inspector of DB police, on April 3 issued a letter after Nazimuddin, chairman of Keraniganj Shubhadda Union Parishad, mentioned Shah Alam's name before the investigators.

On April 5, the HC rejected a writ petition from Shah

Alam, clearing the way to proceed with a corruption case against him.

The Anti-Corruption Commission on March 29, 2007 filed the case with Motijheel Police Station against former BNP minister Mirza Abbas and 11 others for causing a loss of Tk 127.64 crore to the exchequer by selling 18 abandoned government houses at a lower price.

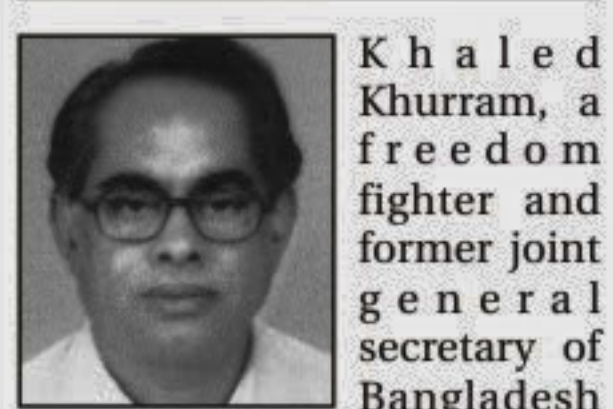
ACC included Shah Alam's name in the charge sheet for purchasing one of the houses at a price lower than the market rate.

Meanwhile, detained Shubhadda UP chairman Nazimuddin and transport businessman Mohammad Moinuddin were placed on a fresh three-day remand in Ahmed Hossain murder case.

Sanowar Hossain, assistant commissioner of DB police, said they sought fresh remand for the two to recover the firearms used for the murder and get information about other persons involved in the killing.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Khaled Khurram, a freedom fighter and former joint general secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra League, passed away yesterday at the age of 59, says a press release.

He was suffering from prolonged ailment.

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

Sabina Alim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Sabina Alim, general secretary of Awami League Shilpi Goshthi of Biman Bandar Thana Unit, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at Crescent Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 42, says a press release.

Home Minister Advocate Sahara Khatun, Awami League Shilpi Goshthi President Salahuddin Badal and General Secretary Shibu Roy expressed deep shock at her death.

Jahangir Hossain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jahangir Hossain, a freedom fighter, worker leader and chief assistant of tax region-3 of Chittagong Income Tax office, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at his Chittagong residence early yesterday.

He left behind his wife, two sons and a host of well wishers to mourn his death, says a press release.

Mojibar Rahman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

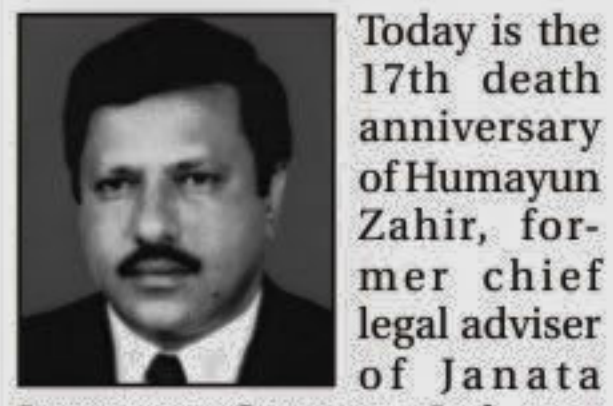
Mojibar Rahman Biswas, popularly known as Alo, Manikganj correspondent of The Daily Ittefaq, passed away at a hospital in Dhaka yesterday at the age of 54.

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

He was also the editor of the Weekly Alor Bani and founding secretary of Manikganj Press Club.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



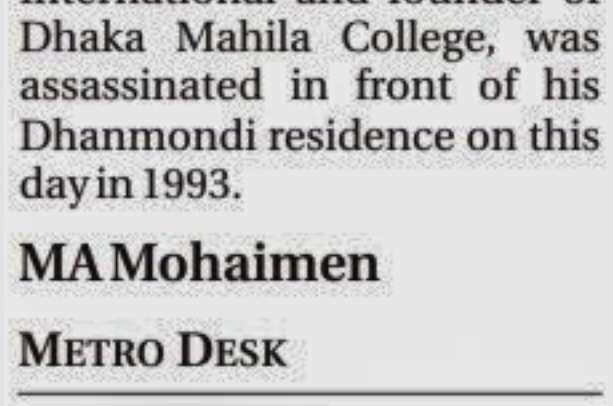
Today is the 17th death anniversary of Humayun Zahir, former chief legal adviser of Janata Insurance Company Ltd, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at the head office of the company at Motijheel in the city at 12:00noon today.

Humayun Zahir, vice-chairman of United Commercial Bank Ltd, District Governor of Lions' Clubs International and founder of Dhaka Mahila College, was assassinated in front of his Dhanmondi residence on this day in 1993.

MA Mohaimen

METRO DESK



Today is the 16th death anniversary of MA Mohaimen, former member of parliament and founder of the Pioneer Printing Press Ltd, says a press release.

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

Monwara Rahman

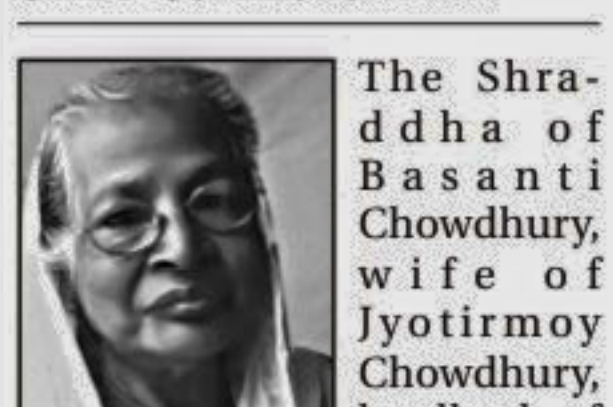
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Today is the first death anniversary of Begum Monwara Rahman, a language movement veteran.

On the occasion, Monwara Rahman Memorial Parishad has taken up a daylong programme.

Shraddha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The Shraddha of Basanti Chowdhury, wife of Jyotirmoy Chowdhury, landlord of Shukhair Estate at Dharmashala in Sunamganj, will be held at her eldest son Subrata Chowdhury's residence at Chatlapur Tea Garden today, says a press release.

WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Sylhet division in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

Severe heat wave sweeping over the region of Rajshahi and mild to moderate heat wave over Ishwardi, Sayedpur, Dinajpur, Khulna, Mongla, Jessore, Chuadanga, Patuakhali, Dhaka, Faridpur and Srimongal may continue.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:17pm today and rises at 5:43am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 41.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 21.0 degrees Celsius at Sayedpur.

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	36.3	27.0	64	61
Chittagong	31.7	26.0	85	78
Rajshahi	41.0	26.2	80	32
Khulna	36.5	26.0	79	56
Barisal	35.5	26.2	76	73
Sylhet	33.9	21.7	74	72
Cox's Bazar	33.7	25.2	72	78