

Confirm tickets by today

Minister urges Hajj pilgrims

BSS, Dhaka

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister G M Quader yesterday urged the hajj pilgrims to confirm their air tickets by today.

"So far all the hajj pilgrims have already confirmed their tickets, however, if anyone is left it is the last call," Quader told a press briefing in the conference room of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

The minister said it would be difficult for the concerned airlines to confirm ticket if any pilgrim asks for it after today.

The ministry and other organisations showed tremendous success in managing hajj flights for the record number pilgrims this year, Quader said.

This year a total of 90,737 pilgrims received visa for performing hajj which is almost double comparing to the numbers of 50,000 in 2009 and 48,000 in 2008.

"This year, we involved eight more airlines as the third carriers apart from Biman Arabian Airlines and Saudi Arabian Airlines for carrying this huge number of hajj pilgrims," he said, adding that so far all the airlines and organisations have performed their duties as per their commitments.

The hajj flights have started on October 9 and would continue till November 10, and the return flights will be started on November 21 and by December 22.

So far, 78,675 hajj pilgrims have already reached Jeddah safely and the rest 12,062 are scheduled to leave the country by November 10.

"However, Saudi Arabian Airlines is ready to operate their Hajj flights for additional two days till November 12, if required," the minister added.

Of the hajj pilgrims who have already reached Jeddah, Biman carried 40,993, Saudi Airlines 12,245 while the third carriers ferried 25,437. Biman still has the capacity of carrying 4,216 hajj pilgrims.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Secretary Shafique Alam Mehedi, Chairman of Board of Directors of Biman Jamal Uddin Ahmed and Managing Director of Biman Air Commodore (ret'd) Muhammad Zakirul Islam were present at the briefing.

Work 4 hours a week for social welfare

MR Khan asks leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Child Specialist and National Prof MR Khan yesterday called upon the leaders of the country to spend at least four hours of a week for the welfare of the country.

He explained, "According to Islam, we have to pay 2.5 percent of our total wealth to poor people every year as Zakat.

If we could manage 2.5 percent from 168 hours of a week and spend that time for the welfare of society, it will be useful for the country," he said.

MR Khan said this while addressing an award giving ceremony, to honour contributions towards society, at the National Press Club in the city.

Shishu Swasthya Foundation, Bangladesh, Doctor MR Khan and Anwara Trust and Bangladesh Unnaya Sangbadikata Forum jointly organised the programme.

Additional Director General of Birdem Prof Nazamun Nahar was awarded Shishubandhu Gold Medal-2010 for her special contribution to pediatric treatment.

Woman leader and forerunner of woman development Tahera Kabir was awarded Dr MR Khan and Anwara Trust Gold Medal-2010.

Student Anti-Smoking Committee (SASC)-Bondhon Esha Khan Smriti Gold Medal-2010 was given to Musa Ibrahim for his pledge against smoking.

Finalise nat'l cooperatives policy, PM tells ministry

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the ministry concerned to finalise a national cooperatives policy on an urgent basis to infuse dynamism into cooperatives activities.

She said the directive while inaugurating the 39th National Cooperative Day at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in the city.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam, chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry Advocate Rahmat Ali and State Minister Jahangir Kabir Nanak also spoke at the function with Rural Development and Cooperatives Secretary Md Golam Quddus in the chair.

Hasina said the government will do whatever is necessary to spread the cooperatives movement across the country to ensure socio-economic and cultural emancipation of the people.

She said her government is implementing Comprehensive Village Development Programme (CVDP), under which each village has to be turned into a centre point of development bringing it under a cooperative.

Listing various programmes undertaken by her previous government for the homeless and poor people, she said it (government) had initiated "Ashrayan and "Ekti Bari, Ekti Khamar" (One Farm in One Homestead) with the aim to build a self-reliant Bangladesh.



PHOTO: PID
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at a function at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

previous tenure, she said her present government has handed over ownership of Chittagong National Cotton Mills on cooperative basis.

Hasina said a Garo community living in Mymensingh, Tangail, Netrakona, and Sherpur. She said the programme would be expanded across the country.

She said her government has taken steps for water management to prevent misuse of water used for irrigation purpose. Initiatives have also been taken to produce solar power-driven pumps to reduce use of electricity, she added.

Besides, five projects were included in the ADP this year for cooperative based bazar management to ensure fair prices of commodities to facilitate their marketing.

Hasina said an ICT development project has been included in the ADP this year with the objective of making cooperative activities dynamic and transparent.

She said her present government is appointing 800 people to various field level posts of the department of cooperatives to further increase dynamism in cooperative activities.

She called upon all to supplement the government efforts to build a poverty-free Digital Bangladesh.

Later, the prime minister handed over a cheque for Tk 20,000 to each family of beneficiaries in seven divisions across the country.

BNP to observe Solidarity Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will observe 'National Revolution and Solidarity Day' today.

The BNP and its front organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes on the occasion.

The ruling Awami League and its front organisations consider November 7 the day of 'killing of freedom fighter soldiers'. And Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Rob) observes it as the day of 'civil-military revolution.'

On the occasion, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in a message greets people and Bangladeshi expatriates wishing peace and prosperity.

She termed November 7 a significant day for the nation and the first step of the country's development.

Khaleda urges people to remain united with the ideology of the day to protect the country's independence and sovereignty.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain also sends greetings to people in a separate message.

The party leaders and activists will place wreaths at the grave of late president Ziaur Rahman early in the morning and will hoist party flag at its central office in the city at 6:00am.

BNP will hold a grand rally in front of its central office at Paltan in the city at 2:00pm today.

Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will address the rally as the chief guest.

US governor Ted due in city Nov 10

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Governor of the US State of Oregon, Ted Kulongoski, will arrive in Dhaka on a three-day visit to Bangladesh on November 10.

The aim of the visit is to build stronger and long-term ties between Oregon and Bangladesh.

Accompanying Ted will be Major General Raymond F Rees, the adjutant general of the Oregon National Guard.

They will meet the civilian and military leaders of Bangladesh who support their State Partnership Program -- an effort to build long-term relationships between individual states and their National Guard units, and foreign countries.

Officials here said the visit is part of a continuing effort to discuss mutual best practices for natural disaster response and medical mass casualty training exercises.



PHOTO: STAR
Prof Mustafa Nurul Islam speaks at a commemorative meeting on cultural revolutionary and prominent singer Kalim Sharafi on Bangla Academy premises yesterday.

Delwar protests PM's remarks on Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday termed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's remarks over the party Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office hours as narrow-mindedness.

Hasina on Friday reportedly mentioned that the opposition leader starts her office from 9:00pm to 2:00am.

Talking to reporters at the late president Ziaur Rahman's mazar, Delwar said they had never raised question where, when and what the PM does.

Earlier, he along with the party leaders and workers placed wreath at Zia's mazar and offered fateha marking the release of BNP standing committee member Mirza Abbas from jail.

Delwar said the present cabinet took the decision "politically to serve notice" upon Khaleda Zia to leave her Dhaka cantonment residence.

"So, BNP will face the matter politically," Delwar urged the PM to behave democratically.

Kalim Sharafi's contributions recalled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens and cultural activists yesterday said Kalim Sharafi will stay alive in people's mind for years as a prominent singer as well as an activist to the movement for establishing a society where healthy cultural activities are encouraged.

Speaking at a commemorative meeting, they paid their rich tributes to the memories and contributions of the cultural revolutionary and prominent singer who died at his Bairidhara residence in the capital on November 2, at the age of 86.

Bangla Academy organised the commemorative meeting on its premises where the speakers recalled Kalim Sharafi's remarkable contributions to the country and cultural activities for years.

"He [Kalim Sharafi] never compromised with his ideology despite facing various obstacles during his lifetime," said educationalist Prof Anisuzzaman.

Prof Karunamoy Goswami said Kalim Sharafi played a significant role in bringing the culture of singing Tagore songs in the country to its present stage.

Singer Tapan Mahmud said Kalim Sharafi never felt irritated when teaching young singers. He rather assisted and gave advice to singers whenever they fell in trouble in both profession and other activities, he added.

Singer Lily Islam expressed concern as many of Kalim's songs were not recorded and so the new generation may not get an opportunity to get acquainted with his works and contributions to society.

Prof Mustafa Nurul Islam said despite coming from a highly conservative religious family, Kalim joined left-leaning politics and participated in various socio-cultural movements as well as became a great singer.

Cultural activist Ramendu Majumder said the veteran singer played a vital role in the expansion of Bangalee culture from the television station in Dhaka before the independence in 1971.

Director General of Bangla Academy Prof Shamsuzzaman Khan said the academy would take initiative to publish a memorial book on Kalim Sharafi to keep his works alive and present them before the new generation.

They urged all concerned to preserve his works for the nation.

Taher's execution was murder in cold blood

Speakers say at discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said Col Taher was killed cold-bloodedly to diminish the spirit of the Liberation War, which tells of socialism, secularism, and economic freedom of the people.

Col Taher's execution was a cold-blooded murder and was part of a conspiracy to diminish the Liberation War's spirit, said Sergeant (ret'd) Rafiqul Islam, Bir Pratik, demanding trial of the murder.

Prof Anwar Hossain, younger brother of Col Taher, presided over the discussion titled "Why it is necessary to conduct the trial of Col Taher murder".

Prof Anwar said, "It was a secret killing. Ziaur Rahman cold-bloodedly killed him in the name of trial. Zia executed the verdict of the 'so called trial' within just three days, which is unprecedented and shows the intention of killing Taher."

"After a long 34 years, the High Court has issued a rule asking the government to submit the secret files of the trial of Col Taher. The order said why the trial would not be called illegal. Now it is time for the trial of Col Taher's killing. And let the people know about how he was killed that time."

Col Taher was the mastermind of the November 7 revolt, which the main opposition BNP observes as national revolution and solidarity day.

"It [execution of Col Taher] was a criminal act, and the trial of it should take place in this very soil," said Manjurul Ahsan Khan, president of Communist Party of Bangladesh. Col Taher, Bir Uttam, wanted to make Bangladesh Army truly the people's army, he added.

Col Taher Sangsad organised the discussion at TSC of Dhaka University to mark the historic November 7. Col Taher's wife Lutfia Taher, among others, was present at the programme.

AL on right track Says Ashraf

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) General Secretary and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam yesterday told party leaders and workers that there was nothing to be worried as AL was on the right track.

"The country has achieved massive development under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in last two years," he said while addressing a workshop of AL publicity and information secretaries at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

The two-day workshop began at prime minister's official residence at Gono Bhaban on Friday and ended yesterday.

Ashraf said if AL fails or it loses people's confidence, the country would go in hands of the forces who want to run the country with 'Pakistani mentality'.

Urging the party leaders and workers to remain alert, he said the fate of AL in the next election depends on the present activities.

"You should keep in mind that people become hurt if they know anybody indulges in corruption in the name of AL," he said and asked them not to derail from the ideals of AL.

Finance Minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhith and PM's Adviser HT Imam, among others, spoke on the occasion.

New pay scale for teachers on the cards

BSS, Dhaka

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday said initiatives would be taken to form a pay scale and enhance dignity of the teachers.

Describing teachers as the architect of nation building, he urged them to devote themselves to their profession.

Nahid was addressing a discussion marking the World Teachers Day-2010 at Dhaka University senate building auditorium as the chief guest.

Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco and Unesco Dhaka Office jointly organised the programme.

'Salehpur Bridge risky'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a rally yesterday demanded immediate steps from the authorities concerned to reconstruct Salehpur Bridge and its approach roads to prevent road accidents.

They said the bridge is too narrow for vehicles to cross smoothly and the approach road has bends with no traffic signs or speed bumps, posing a risk to incoming traffic.

A number of accidents occurred in the spot due to these reasons, they said.

They made the remarks while addressing the rally titled "Salehpur bridge is a death trap: We demand punishment of responsible individuals and institutions", organised by Poribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba) in front of the National Press Club, says a press release.

DEATH OF SUSPECTED ROBBERS Residents flee home to avoid arrests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many residents at Habibnagar of Kadamtoli went into hiding in fear of being arrested in relation to Friday's incident in which five suspected robbers were beaten to death.

Unspecified numbers of local people were accused in a murder case filed by police in connection with the killing immediately after the incident.

Locals said many inhabitants of the area left their homes and switched off their cell phones out of panic.

Meanwhile, a court granted a two-day remand against Mahfuz, a suspected robber, after police sought for a five-day remand yesterday.

Mahfuz was arrested yesterday morning while he was hiding in the nearby lake since the incident.

Abul Kalam Azad, sub-inspector of Kadamtoli police station, said Nazrul Islam, another suspected robber, who was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition, wasn't produced before the court as his condition didn't allow.

So far three bodies of the five robbers have been identified and taken away by their relatives.

The deceased are Feroz, 28, Amir, 30, and Samrat, 25, all hailing from Keraniganj.

However, locals of Keraniganj and relatives of the dead said the three used to steal rickshaws and rickshaw vans mostly.

'Remove bidi, cigarette shops from near schools, colleges'

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance (Bata) demanded removal of shops that sell bidi and cigarettes near schools and colleges, as stalkers generally take position at these places and harass the girls.

The shops should be removed from 500 yards of educational institutions to save the youths from addiction and resist the crime.

Sexual harassment has become alarming nowadays, which threatens education of girls and even leading them to death, said the speakers at a human chain.

Bata arranged the programme in front of the National Press Club, attended by its Coordinator Saifuddin Ahmed among others.

Generally addicted, stalkers can do anything dangerous. Smoking is the gateway of addiction, which leads the youths to Phensidyl, hemp, heroin, and other drugs.

The addicts gradually involve in theft, mugging, and harassing women and girls.

DHAKA TODAY

Discussion
Bangabandhu Sangsad will hold a discussion. Time: 10:30am, Venue: Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Roundtable
Brac will organise a roundtable. Time: 10:00am, Venue: Brac Centre.

Protest Rally
Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association (BSCBA) will hold a protest rally. Time: 10:00am, Venue: BSCBA premises.

Discussion
Col Taher Sangsad will organise a discussion. Time: 4:00pm, Venue: TSC, Dhaka University.

Workshop
ActionAid Bangladesh will organise a national workshop. Time: 10:00am, Venue: Cirdap Auditorium.

Launching Ceremony
Brac University will hold a launching ceremony. Time: 4:00pm, Venue: Brac University campus.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong 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.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country sets.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:16pm today and rises at 6:09am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 19.0 degrees Celsius at Dinajpur and 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	33.2	23.2	61	67
Chittagong	32.3	23.6	76	73
Rajshahi	33.0	19.6	77	79
Rangpur	30.5	20.0	74	78
Khulna	32.3	21.6	76	76
Barisal	33.0	22.4	78	93
Sylhet	32.7	21.9	54	70
Cox's Bazar	33.0	24.4	76	77

Death anniversary

DU CORRESPONDENT

Today is the third death anniversary of Dr Zohra Begum Kazi, the first female physician of the Indian subcontinent.

She completed MBBS from Delhi's Lady Harding Medical College for Women in 1935 and was awarded the 'Viceroy' title for obtaining first class. She served in Dhaka Medical College for a long time.

Dr Zohra received many awards including prestigious Kushey Padak and Begum Rokeya Padak, says a press release.

On the occasion, special prayers and milad mahfil have been arranged at city's Baitul Mokarram Mosque and in her village home of Kalkini upazila in Madaripur district after Asr prayers.

A discussion programme has also been arranged at Birdem Hospital auditorium in the city at 11:00am on November 13 to commemorate her death.

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

Comrade Abdus Sattar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 14th death anniversary of Comrade Abdus Sattar Khan, founder president of Bangladesh Krishok Federation, says a press release.

Bangladesh Krishok Federation along with seven other organisations chalked out elaborate programmes marking the day.

Leaders of eight organisations will participate in different programmes, including milad mahfil, discussion and poster exhibition, at his village home in Dashmina under Patuakhali. The leaders will also place wreaths at the grave of Comrade Sattar.

Asha Alamgir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the second death anniversary of Asha Alamgir, wife of Fakir Ashke Alamgir, says a press release.

On the occasion, recitation from the holy Quran and a milad mahfil have been arranged at their residence in city's Chowdhurypara of Kligan and prayer has also been arranged at Matir Mosque in Kligan area.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend and pray for the salvation of the departed soul.