

Khaleda distributes food among poor

UNB, Dhaka

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia for the third day yesterday distributed cooked food among poor people in different areas of the city in observance of the 30th death anniversary of former president Ziaur Rahman. She started the social charity service from New Eskaton at about 12:00pm and continued till 4:15pm.

Khaleda distributed food among men, women and children around 25 spots including Segun Bagicha, Kakrail, Jatiya Press Club, Bangladesh Shishu Academy, High Court Mazar, Kaptan Bazar, Nawabpur, Victoria Park Masjid, Sadar Ghat, Naya Bazar, Bangshal, Shahjahanpur, Motijheel, Khilgaon and Malibagh.

She also visited free medical camp launched by Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB), a forum of pro-BNP physicians, in front of BNP central office at Naya Palatan to provide free treatment to the poor.

On May 30, Khaleda inaugurated the food distribution programme at Mohammadpur Town Hall.

She is scheduled to distribute food today on conclusion of the programme.



A man finds it hard to pull his cart on the pitted street with improperly positioned manhole covers in front of Bayetul Aman Housing Society in Adabor in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

City road to be named after Indira Gandhi

BSS, Dhaka

The government is to name a major city road after former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as part of initiatives to honour the country's foreign friends who contributed to its 1971 emergence as an independent nation.

"We proposed the naming of several roads after our 1971 foreign friends including former Indian premier Indira Gandhi," said Foreign Minister Dipu Moni after emerging from a high-profile national committee meeting comprising distinguished citizens and officials.

She said the committee would now consult with the government and Dhaka City Corporation.

Dipu Moni, who heads the committee, said they so far listed 500 foreign friends to honour at a special ceremony in Dhaka on a convenient date ahead of the 41st Victory Day on December 16 this year.

She said more names would be gradually included and among those not able to join the ceremony would be conferred with the honour by herself or Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina later in their own country during their visits.

Jamaat top brass on detention till July 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday directed the jail authorities to keep four top Jamaat-e-Islami leaders including Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami detained until July 12 in connection with crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War.

The three others are Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojaheed and assistant secretaries general Muhammad Kamaruzzaman and Abdul Quader Molla. The four leaders were produced before the court in the morning.

The order came following a petition filed by the prosecution on May 31.

The three-member tribunal headed by Justice Nizamul Huq asked the prosecutors to submit the final report on the investigation into allegations against them by July 12.

The court asked for a progress report on the investigation if the prosecution fails to place the final report on time.

It also instructed the jail authorities to allow Nizami and Mojaheed to take treatment at Birdem Hospital, if necessary, at their own cost and arrange special food for them as they are diabetic patients.

Upon two other separate petitions, the tribunal allowed interrogation of Kamaruzzaman and Abdul Quader Molla at Dhanmondi "safe home" for one day each on charges of war crimes.

The Jamaat leaders will be interrogated from 10:00am to 5:00pm with an hour's break from 1:00pm, the tribunal said adding that the investigators would fix the dates for interrogation.

A doctor and a counsel of the accused will be present at a room adjacent to the interrogation room. The doctor will examine the health condition of the accused before and after the interrogations.

The tribunal also directed the investigators not to exert any pressure on them during interrogation. The interrogations will be held in Bangla so the accused can understand questions and can reply properly.

Syed Rezaur Rahman and Mukhlesur Rahman Badal appeared as prosecutors while M Tajul Islam and Munshi Ahsan Kabir argued for the accused persons.

UP POLL VIOLENCE BNP man dies in gunfight with cops, hartal today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A man was killed and 10 others were injured during an exchange of fire between supporters of a BNP backed chairman candidate and law enforcers in Bera upazila of Pabna early yesterday.

Police recovered the bullet-hit body of Osman Goni Gama, 40, a BNP supporter from Haturia village around noon yesterday, Officer-in-Charge of Bera Police Station Sheikh Zillur Rahman told The Daily Star.

The BNP-backed candidate's supporters also beat up four policemen during the incident, police said.

Pabna Superintendent of Police (SP) Jahangir Hossain Matabbar told The Daily Star that the altercation occurred over the results of the local chairman election. Supporters of Chand Pramanik, chairman candidate from Haturia Nakalia union backed by BNP, approached the presiding officer late Tuesday night asking for the documents declaring the win of their candidate. The win of the candidate had verbally been announced by then.

The supporters got agitated when they were told that the process would take time

and the returning officer would do it. As unrest grew, the authority decided to take the ballot boxes from the polling centre to the control room in the Bera TNO's office for security reasons. The agitating crowd would not allow them to do so, alleging the ballot papers would be "stolen".

The men put up a barricade on the road and tried to snatch the ballot boxes from the authority. They also attacked the four policemen escorting the polling authority transferring the boxes.

A team of police led by the SP of Bera Police Station was called to the spot after which the unruly BNP men opened fire on the law enforcers prompting them to fire back, said the SP. The firing left one man dead on the spot.

Following the incident, police in a dawn raid yesterday picked up 10 people including presiding officer of Haturia Jagannathpur Dugdho Samobai Samity centre Abdul Hamin and polling officer Kabirul Islam for involvement in the shooting. They were taken in for interrogation.

Meanwhile, the upazila BNP unit yesterday called a half-day hartal today in protest at the killing of the BNP supporter.

MISBEHAVIOUR OC kept standing in court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A police officer was asked to remain standing before a court for over three hours yesterday after he misbehaved with a lawyer during trial proceeding of a murder case.

Judge Mohammad Akhteruzzaman of the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court in Dhaka held Mohammad Salahuddin, officer-in-charge (OC) of Administration, Cantonment Police Station for misbehaving with Advocate Mohammad Borhan Uddin, a defence lawyer of the case.

The court released the OC at 3:00pm after he sought unconditional apology for his conduct.

The court also warned him to remain cautious of his future behaviour in court.

Advocate Borhan Uddin started cross-examining Salauddin at about 11:30am on behalf of the three accused in the Moktar Hossain Khoka murder case.

The lawyer adopted various strategies while trying to unearth facts from Salauddin who investigated the case from March 30 to April 21 in 1995 as a sub-inspector of Mirpur Police Station.

At one stage, the OC misbehaved with the lawyer.

He did not even pay any heed to the court order when the judge repeatedly asked him to control himself.

\$8m to maximise use of water, land

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alliance of international organisations yesterday launched an \$8 million research programme to find ways to maximise the use of water and land in the country's coastal region.

The research will be done under the six-year programme to find ways to make the saline and disaster-prone region productive by developing new salt-tolerant crop varieties, introducing new brackish water fish species and managing saline water.

Forty percent of the country's population lives in the coastal belt that covers 32 percent of the country's land, said a speaker at the launching of Ganges Basin Development Challenge Research for Development Programme at Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) auditorium.

The Washington-based Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) will conduct research in partnership with The WorldFish Center, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), International Water Management Institute and local organisations.

Agriculturists said 10 lakh hectares of land in the southern coast remain fallow due to salinity and natural disasters.

Aman cultivation is often damaged in the monsoon for natural disasters, while boro, a dry season rice, cannot be cultivated there due to salinity, pointed out The WorldFish Center's South Asia Director William J Collis. He also suggested for introducing new fish species in the region.

IRRI Liaison Scientist MA Hamid Mia said fallow lands could be used to grow short-duration and saline-tolerant boro during the dry season.

A comparative study should be done to ascertain whether one needs to transform his fishery to arable land when fish cultivation seems more profitable, said additional secretary Anwar Faruque of agriculture ministry.

Agriculturists said Bangladesh's food production depends on the north and northwestern regions where ground water levels are depleting for heavy use of water for dry season rice -- boro.

"Exploring the opportunities in the south is a demand of time," said BARC Executive Chairman Wais Kabir. Scientists must think of developing technologies considering not only the present challenges, but also that of future, added Kabir.

Boru Douthwaite of CGIAR and Parimal Chandra Saha of water resources ministry also spoke in the launching.

Combat sexual harassment Speakers urge all

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a mass gathering yesterday called upon people of all strata of society to come forward for raising their united voice against sexual harassment for eradicating the menace from the society.

They made the remarks while addressing a function at Alatumnesha School auditorium at city's Maddhya Badda.

Stalking or sexual harassment continues to increase like a contagious disease in our society, they said, calling upon all to do their best to curb such social illness.

Osman Goni, president of managing committee of Alatumnesha School; was the chief guest while Sheepa Hafiza, director of Brac Gender Justice and Diversity and Advocacy; was the special guest.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 15th death anniversary of advocate Dabir Uddin Ahmed, a former

lawmaker and organiser of Liberation War, says a press release.

On the occasion, milad mahfil and qurankhwani will be held at his village home at Islampur of Ullapara in Sirajganj and 261/B, Khilgaon Chowdhurypara in the city.

Obituary

METRO DESK



Babu Shib Sankar Roy, an artist of Digan to Advertising, passed away on Tuesday due to respiration failure, says a press release.

RMCH needs proper care

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Speakers here yesterday expressed concern over the mismanagement at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) and demanded immediate steps for ensuring proper healthcare services at the region's important hospital.

They also made a set of demand include natural gas supply for industrial use and test cricket venue in Rajshahi, implementation of the proposed North Rajshahi irrigation project and construction of Ganges Barrage for protecting desertification of North Bengal.

The meeting was held under the banner of Rajshahi Rakkha Sangram Parishad (RRSP) at Laxmipur in the city while RRSP President Liakat Ali was in the chair.

They demanded hanging of a duty roster for doctors at RMCH alleging that the physicians are not seen in the hospital after evening.

They also alleged that the authorities concerned remain silent against illegal private practice of the doctors at clinics around the hospital.

They said a section of doctors, who are mysteriously overstaying at the hospital for years, use some intern doctors as their "musclemen." And the "musclemen" attack patients or their attendants if the

victims protest any wrong treatment or negligence of duty by the physicians, they added.

Speakers made a set of demands including natural gas supply for industrial use and test cricket venue in Rajshahi, implementation of the proposed North Rajshahi irrigation project and construction of Ganges Barrage for containing desertification of North Bengal

RRSP General Secretary Jamat Khan said lawmaker Omar Faruk Chowdhury himself

spotted a nexus of doctors and staff involved in the hospital's drug stealing in last February, but no action is yet to be taken.

The speakers said the government is supplying natural gas for household uses in Rajshahi, but the initiative will be of no effect unless the gas can be used for industrial use.

Lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badsha criticised the RMCH authorities for irregularities and assured of raising the demands in the parliament.

Speaking as the chief guest, Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton said natural gas through pipelines would be available in Rajshahi within July and then he would join people's movement for gas supply in industrial uses.

On RMCH issue, the mayor said he would have resigned from the president post of the RMCH directorial council, unless it would not have been an ex officio post.

He assured that he would inquire into the allegations against the hospital in the upcoming meeting of the council.

Women leaders Kolpona Roy, Sufia Begum, Awami League leaders Asaduzzaman, Shahin Akhtar, RRSP members Manjurul Hasan and Debashish Pramanik also spoke.

Tk 23 lakh looted from real estate co

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Masked raiders broke into the head office of a real estate developer company amid tight security at Goal Pahar intersection in the port city and looted valuables and Tk 23.5 lakh in cash in the early hours of yesterday.

Police said the burglars entered the office of Mishmak Development Ltd on the 5th floor of the tower cutting the iron grill around 2:00am yesterday. The thieves might have climbed the 5th floor from an adjacent under-construction building, police suspected.

There are eight closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras at the office, said Manjur Morshed, assistant manager of the company, adding that the recorded tape shows a thief wearing mask entered the office breaking the grill and disconnected all eight cameras.

He said the other burglars might have entered after the cameras were disconnected. The thieves broke open two volts, one belonging to Mishmak Development Ltd and the other to Mishmak Shipbreaking Ltd, he added.

Mizanur Rahman Shahin, managing director and chairman of Mishmak group, said Tk 13.5 lakh was kept in the vault of Mishmak Development Ltd and Tk 10 lakh in the vault of Mishmak Shipbreaking Ltd.

The money was put for paying salary to the staff, he said. A police team visited the spot and collected evidence yesterday morning.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP-north) Amena Begum said a professional gang of burglars might be involved in the break-in.

DHAKA TODAY

Rally
National Democratic Party will organise a rally; Venue: Photojournalist Association auditorium; Time: 10:30am.

Discussion
Sector Commanders' Forum will hold a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

Programme
Bangladesh Society for Burn Injuries will organise a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 4:00pm.

Discussion
Research and Development Collective will hold a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.

Discussion
Bangladesh Nationalist Party will hold a discussion; Venue: Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh; Time: 3:00pm.

Rally
Citizens Rights Movement will organise a discussion; Venue: in front of Nimtoli Chhata Mosque; Time: 10:00am.

Seminar