

Diplomat Masum Chy passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Masum Ahmed Chowdhury, former ambassador, passed away due to

cancer-related complications at the Suburban Hospital in Bethesda in Maryland on Saturday night. He was 69.

Masum was undergoing treatment at Johns Hopkins Hospital for lung cancer, said a press release of Bangladesh Embassy in New York.

He left behind his wife, sons, daughter in laws, and grand children to mourn his death.

He is the son of late Ghyasuddin Ahmed Chowdhury and late Rafiqunnesa Khatun Chowdhury of Sylhet and brother of Faruq Choudhury and Enam Chowdhury.

BSS adds: Masum was buried in Maryland yesterday noon.

A doa mahfil will be held at Gulshan Jame Mosque in Dhaka at 5:00pm on March 23.

Golam Faruk

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Golam Faruk, a litterateur, a former district registrar and younger

brother of the daily Samakal editor Golam Sarwar, died of cardiac arrest in a city hospital yesterday, says a press release.

He was 59.

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

He was buried at his family graveyard in Banaripara upazila of Barisal after holding his namaz-e-janaza on Banaripara High School premises.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 41st death anniversary of M Osman Ali, editor of Sabuj Bangla

newspaper and a language movement hero.

A milad mahfil, destitute feeding programme and discussion will be held at his Narayanganj residence, said a press release.

Abu Zafar Obaidullah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 11th death anniversary of poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah.

He was born in Barisal in 1934, said a press release.

His talent in poetry burgeoned from the childhood. Zafar was picked up by police from a procession during the Language Movement in 1952. He then composed a famous poem "Mago, Ora Bole".

Kazi Golam Mahub

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the sixth death anniversary of former president of Supreme Court Lawyers

Association and a language movement veteran Kazi Golam Mahub.

A doa mahfil will be held in Dhaka and Barisal.

Qulkhwani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Qulkhwani of Abdul Ali, former director of Sudhijan Library, will be held today.

On the occasion, a milad and doa mahfil will be held at Galachipa Jame Mosque in Narayanganj after Maghrib prayers, said a press release.

Abdul Ali passed away on last Friday.



Journalists chant slogans at a grand rally on the street before the Jatiya Press Club yesterday demanding immediate arrest and trial of the killers of their colleagues, Sagar Sarowar and his wife Meherun Runi. (Story on Page 20)

PHOTO: STAR

Alleged ISI funding to BNP slammed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different political party leaders believe that the main opposition BNP received money from Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) ahead of the 1991 parliamentary elections and termed it a shameful incident for the nation and its politics.

They demanded that the government investigate the matter and find whether the BNP is still receiving money from the ISI.

The BNP has termed the allegation "baseless".

During a hearing in the Pakistan Supreme Court, the ISI admitted to meddling in Indian's Northeast and funding BNP during 1991 general election, reported Daily Mail Online on March 15. Recently a UAE-based daily had alleged that ISI paid Rs 50 crore to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia ahead of the 1991 elections, it said.

By taking money from the ISI, the BNP proved that it nurtures the values and principles of Pakistan, a leader of Workers Party of Bangladesh, Bimal Biswas, told The Daily Star. He said the ISI gave the money as the BNP has a pro-Pakistan political ideology.

"Any foreign funding in the politics of Bangladesh is harmful for the country's sovereignty," said Bimal, also an Awami League-led 14-party combine leader.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Lt Col (retd) Faruk Khan said, "It is a matter of great shame that Bangladesh's second largest political party took money from a foreign country's intelligence agency for election and political activities.

"They (BNP) took money from the ISI once, which was proven in the Pakistani court. But I doubt whether they (BNP) are continuously taking money from ISI!

"The government should inquire into the whole matter immediately and take appropriate steps accordingly."

Talking to The Daily Star, Faruk said the ISI is widely blamed for sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan and its neighboring countries and

Bangladeshis must understand how terrorism was created here in the country.

Communist Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim said the US Central Intelligence Agency had been financing the ISI for a long time and a portion of that money was coming to Bangladesh.

"Those who took money from the ISI should apologise to the nation," he said, without naming anyone.

Alongside the US and Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and India are also financing political parties in the country. For example, he said, Jamaat-e-Islami regularly receives money from the Saudi government.

"The government should form a commission to let people know which countries are financing political parties in Bangladesh."

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leader Shirin Akhter said such funding is not good for the country and its politics.

No patriotic leader can take money from a foreign intelligence agency, she said, urging the government to establish a mechanism to monitor such funding.

Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said the information about the funding was revealed by the former ISI chief Asad Durrani in Pakistan's Supreme Court and is not the allegation of his party or by any pro-government media.

He said the country is not safe with the BNP in it and the BNP chief has committed an unforgivable crime.

"BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia should seek apology to the countrymen and then leave the country for Pakistan," he said.

Referring to the killing of thousands of AL leaders and workers since 1995, Hanif, also a special assistant to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, said the ISI wanted revenge with the help of the BNP at different times for Pakistan's defeat in 1971.

Both the BNP and the ISI wanted to turn Bangladesh into a failed state, he told The Daily Star.

Self-sufficiency in food not achieved yet

Says Muhith

UNB, Dhaka

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday said that the country is yet to achieve the overall self-sufficiency in food.

"[When it comes to] overall self-sufficiency, [I'll say] no. But, self-sufficiency in rice is yes, in food grains, mostly," he told reporters after visiting director general of Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Jose Graziano met him at his office at the Economic Relations Division (ERD).

Muhith said the country has shortages in wheat production, but it is almost self-sufficient in maize output.

"But, still we have a better prospect for more maize production. We always have shortages in wheat because we can't produce more than one million tonnes a year," he added.

The finance minister said the overall self-sufficiency also means meat, egg, milk and fish.

The FAO DG said the organisation has some regular and emergency programmes in Bangladesh involving \$ 100 million which are engaged in tackling cyclone, drought and heavy rains.

"We've decided to integrate these two programmes (regular and emergency)," he added.

Khaleda in conspiracy since liberation

Says Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Accusing her arch rival Khaleda Zia of having no feeling for Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the opposition leader had been conspiring against the country since its liberation.

"It's now clear that Khaleda has been hatching conspiracy against Bangladesh since its independence," she told a discussion on 'National Children Day' at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC).

Awami League organised the discussion with its Presidium Member and Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury in the chair.

AL Presidium Member Yusuf Humayun, Railways Minister Suranjit Sengupta, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Presidium Member MK Alamgir, General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam, Jute and Textiles Minister Abdul Latif Siddiqui and Joint Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif also spoke.

Hasina said Ziaur Rahman was a freedom fighter by chance, but his wife (Khaleda) never expressed solidarity with the country's inde-

pendence.

"According to a book by BNP leader Major Hafiz, she (Khaleda) did not went to her husband, rather she preferred living in a mess of Dhaka Cantonment with Pakistani army," the prime minister said. "Now it's clear to everyone why she didn't go to her husband, who was a sector commander during the Liberation War."

Referring to a news report, Hasina said there is nothing abnormal that Khaleda would take money from Pakistani intelligence ISI.

In this connection, she mentioned that Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda were born in India. "She (Khaleda) was born in a tea garden in Shiliguri (India). Ziaur Rahman was also born in India. That's why they have no feeling for Bangladesh."

Hasina also said there is nothing dirtier like acting as a 'middleman' for a defeated force.

She mentioned that taking money from the ISI was revealed in a Pakistani court where a former ISI chief made his statement. "It'll also come to light one day that how much money Khaleda had taken from the ISI during the 2001 elections."



Kazi Golam Mahboob

Loving grandfather, father and husband.

A former President of the Supreme Court Bar, he was an activist of the 1944 Liberation Movement against the British Rule & Convener of the 1952 Language Movement.

Today, on his 6th death Anniversary, a milad mahfil & prayer congregation have been arranged in Dhaka & at his birthplace, Gournadi, Barisal.

Family Members

TIPAIMUKH DAM

Indian lawmaker supports concerns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Calling for united protest against India's plan to construct the Tipaimukh dam, an Indian parliament member yesterday said the dam would adversely affect both Bangladesh and India's Manipur, Assam and Mizoram states.

Addressing a rally at Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar, Dr Tarun Mandal, member of Lok Sabha (the lower house of parliament), said thousands of Manipur residents would be displaced once the dam on Barak river becomes operational. Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal organised the rally where its General Secretary Khalequzzaman and former member of the Assam Bidhan Sabha Zainal Abedin also spoke.

Speakers at the rally expressed concern on India's unilateral control of the Barak-Surma-Kushiyara though it is an international river.

They said the dam would greatly reduce the flow of Surma, Kushiyara and Meghna rivers during the dry season and trigger river erosion and flooding in the rainy season, rendering thousands of Sylhet residents homeless.

Moudud gets bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to former law minister and the BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed in a tax evasion case.

Judge Mohammad Zahurul Haq of the Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after Moudud appeared before the court and sought bail in the case as his bail period granted by the High Court (HC) expired on March 16.

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