

Abduction day of RP Shaha today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 41st abduction day of eminent philanthropist Raibahadur RP Shaha, and his son Bhabaniprasad Shaha, says a press release.

The Pakistani army with the help of their local collaborators picked up RP Shaha and his son from their Narayanganj office on this day during the Liberation War in 1971 but they did not return.

It was assumed that they had been killed for supporting the Liberation War.

Local people of Mirzapur of Tangail district and Kumudini Welfare Trust will arrange special prayers at Kumudini Complex at 7:00am to mark the day. Later, a session of devotional songs and rituals will be held at the parental house of RP Shaha.

RP Shaha founded the Kumudini Hospital, Bharateswari Homes, Kumudini College and Devendra College. He donated all of his properties to Kumudini Welfare Trust (KWT) that runs the healthcare and educational centres, the release added.

Help save Khondkar Habibur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Noted intellectuals have appealed for financial assistance for the treatment of Khondkar Habibur Rahman, a pioneer of public relations and former director of Power Development Board, who is suffering from lung cancer.

Habibur Rahman, who worked in newspapers and many other organisations, is undergoing treatment but no satisfactory improvement can be seen.

Doctors have advised him to go to Singapore for better treatment but it is not possible for him to afford the treatment cost.

In light of the dire situation, the intellectuals, in a joint statement on May 5, have appealed to philanthropic organisations and well-off people in and outside the country to come forward to save his life.

All donations and contributions can be deposited at A/C no 010112100045504, Mercantile Bank (main branch), or sent to his present address: House no 50 (6th floor), Road no 19, Sector no 14, Uttara, Dhaka.

The intellectuals include Dr Anisuzzaman, Kazi Fazlur Rahman, poet Saiful Bari, Kazi Mozammel Haque, Prof Hassan Abdul Kaium, Mostafa Zaman Abbasi, M Haider Chowdhury, and M Tajul Islam, says a press release.



(Left) Foreign Minister Dipu Moni sees off US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital yesterday. Hillary in conversation with some Bangladeshi youths earlier at a programme, "A Conversation with Bangladesh", organised by the US embassy at International School Dhaka in Bashundhara Residential Area in the capital. (Story on Page 1)



PHOTO: STAR, PID

Indo-Bangla joint body meets today

Dipu Moni leaves for New Delhi

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni went to New Delhi yesterday to take part in the first Bangladesh-India Joint Commission meeting and discuss bilateral issues including the Teesta water-sharing deal with India.

Dipu Moni would co-chair the meeting with Indian External Affairs Minister SM Krishna at 12:30pm today.

Sources said issues, including the Teesta water sharing deal, implementation of land boundary agreement and an extradition treaty would be high on the agenda.

Foreign ministry sources said the delegation level Joint Commission meeting would be followed by a joint media interaction where the two ministers would be present.

According to her programme schedule, Dipu Moni would meet Indian Water Resources Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal tomorrow at 2:30pm. She would also meet with Home Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram at 4:15pm and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at his official residence at 5:30pm tomorrow.

The Joint Commission was formed under the Framework Agreement on Cooperation for Development signed dur-

ing Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Dhaka on September 6-7, 2011.

The Joint Commission was envisaged as an annual event at foreign/external affairs minister level to jointly coordinate and oversee implementation of initiatives as well as to explore newer avenues for cooperation.

Sources said Dhaka and New Delhi would discuss and review implementation of agreements, initiatives and decisions agreed upon during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to New Delhi in January, 2010, and Manmohan Singh's Dhaka visit last year.

India has been pushing for early signing of an extradition treaty but Dhaka is working on a draft and has not yet finalised any decision whether to sign.

Both sides would talk about strengthening cooperation on security, combating insurgents, countering terrorism and other border related issues.

Dipu Moni would be the guest of honour at the closing ceremony of the year-long joint celebrations of the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi later today.

Govt influences court: Moudud

UNB, Dhaka

Accusing the government of influencing court as police has kept the Supreme Court cordoned, the BNP-led opposition lawmakers yesterday said that political confrontation would increase if the path of justice was closed.

Addressing a press conference at the Parliament Media Centre, BNP's front ranking leader Barrister Moudud Ahmed MP said that the accused could not appear before the Supreme Court for anticipatory bail as police has kept the court cordoned.

The press conference was organised to protest the government action implicating eight opposition MPs in two cases setting fire to a bus near PM's office and bomb blasts at the Secretariat during hartal on April 29.

Modud alleged that the court was influenced by the government and said the government had made the country "a police state."

Quader urges opposition not to complain to foreigners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communications and Railways Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday urged the opposition party not to tarnish the country's image by complaining to "foreigners" against the government.

"If the government behaves in an undemocratic way, criticise it in a constructive manner. If you complain to foreigners, then we will place counter-complaints. This will surely tarnish the nation's image," he said.

Obaidul was addressing as chief guest a seminar, "Sheikh Hasina in restoration of democracy, development and struggle for peace", in the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

Durnirbar Bangladesh, a social organisation, organised the seminar marking May 7, the day during the caretaker government in 2007 when Sheikh Hasina returned home from abroad.

"We will have disputes...it is the beauty of democracy. We can debate...we can argue through political speeches. But we should not undermine the nation."

"If the state's reputation is undermined, you will get foreign masters instead of foreign friends. Then you will have to serve as slaves," he said.

On the recent visits of a number of high-profile foreign delegates, Quader said, "This was made possible because Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has made Bangladesh attrac-

tive to foreigners."

He also stressed the need for political understanding between the government and opposition parties to maintain a sound political relation and atmosphere.

He strongly criticised the main opposition BNP for taking back its greetings over the victory in a case over the maritime boundary dispute with Myanmar.

He expressed his firm hope to start construction of the Padma bridge within the next nine months.

On the dispute over the World Bank funding of the bridge, he said, "We want to use the fund in other projects. We do not want World Bank to take back the money."

He said an elected government should stay in power for at least two consecutive terms to implement its different development activities and accelerate democracy.

Addressing as the special guest, State Minister for Liberation War Affairs AB Tajul Islam said the trial of some of the top war crimes suspects will be completed by this year.

"If we want to establish the rule of law, the war criminals must be tried," he said.

State Minister for Science and Technology Yeafesh Osman and Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique also spoke at the seminar, chaired by Durnirbar Bangladesh Convener Masud Parvez.



Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia talks to Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee at the party's Gulshan office in the capital yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: BNP

Domestic help 'raped' by employer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 13-year-old domestic help, now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital's (DMCH) One Stop Crisis Centre (OCC), filed a case on Saturday accusing her employer of raping her.

The girl, in her first information report, stated that her employer, Imam Hossain Wasim, resident of Block C in the capital's Bashundhara Residential Area, occasionally raped her from the second year of her three-year work period.

Two months ago when the girl informed Imam's wife, Moitree Hossain Mumu, of the abuse, she abetted him and started beating her regularly, she added.

The girl was able to flee from the couple on May 2. A female bus passenger, hearing of her plight, took her to Lalbagh Police Station.

She was then transferred to the custody of Aparajeyo Bangladesh Child Health Line, which admitted her to DMCH on May 3.

Medical tests conducted on May 4 confirmed that the girl had been raped and tortured, said OCC Chief Coordinator Dr Bilkis Begum, adding that marks of injury, both fresh and old, were found on the girl's body.

The case was filed with Bhatara Police Station under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

The case's Investigation Officer Sub-Inspector Syed Al Mamun said police will take the girl to identify the house so that the accused can be arrested.

Equal rights for people of all faiths ensured, says PM

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina last night said her government wants everyone, irrespective of religion, caste and creed, to live with equal rights and follow their religion freely and with festivity.

"The government has been working hard to create such an environment," she said.

Hasina was addressing members of the Buddhist community at her official Gono Bhaban residence in the capital marking Buddha Purnima.

Referring to the 15th amendment to the constitution, she said her government ensured equal rights for believers of all religions and restored the spirit of the 1971 Liberation War through this amendment.

"People of all faiths in the country are enjoying their religious rights equally and peacefully due to the bold and

prudent steps of the present government," she said.

Hasina said the previous BNP-Jamaat alliance government tarnished Bangladesh's image and projected it to the world as a country of militancy.

"But, we have brightened the country's image by rooting out militancy and terrorism," she said.

She said, apart from Awami League activists, people of Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Buddhist communities were also brutally tortured and repressed during the five-year "dark chapter" of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government from 2001.

"As many as 21,000 AL leaders and workers and 16 journalists were killed during this time," she said.

Hasina said her present government, after assuming office in 2009, did not take any revenge for the torture and repression as AL does not believe in the

politics of vengeance.

"Rather, we applied our all out strength for the welfare of the people and development of the country," she said, adding that this resulted in tremendous development in different fields of the country.

Extending her heartiest greetings to the people of the Buddhist community on the occasion, Hasina called upon all to work unitedly to ensure advancement of the country by following the message of non-violence of Lord Buddha.

"We want to build Bangladesh as a hunger and poverty-free peaceful country in South Asia following the teachings of Lord Buddha," she said.

Bangladesh Buddha Krishti Prachar Sangha President Bishuddhananda Mohathero and Buddhist Welfare Trust Vice President Sajal Kumar Talukdar also addressed the function, conducted by Supta Bhushan Barua.

Political will stressed to cut maternal, newborn deaths

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Global maternal and child health specialists yesterday emphasised 'strong and sustainable' political commitment to reducing maternal and newborn deaths.

They made the call at the end of a three-day programme titled "Asia regional meeting on interventions for impact on essential newborn and obstetric care: Make every mother and baby count".

USAID's flagship Maternal and Child Health Integrated Programme (MCHIP) organised the meeting at a hotel in the capital, said a press release.

The specialists also called upon donors to invest more to help the vulnerable countries tackle challenges in reducing maternal deaths.

Cop presses for murder case withdrawal: Complainant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The complainant of a murder case alleged that a police official has been pressing him to withdraw an under trial case which he filed for "killing" his sister.

In a written statement, Jamal Miah of village Rajapur in Madhabpur upazila under Habiganj alleged that Sub-Inspector (SI) Kamal Hossain of Madhabpur Police Station of the district has been pressing him to withdraw the case which is now under trial at the additional district & session judge court.

Jamal Miah, a poor farmer, made the allegation at a press conference at Habiganj Press Club on Saturday afternoon demanding departmental enquiry and action against the police officer.

Getting a phone call, Jamal went to the police station in the evening of March 30 this year and found the accused of his sister's murder case sitting in front of the police officer, Jamal alleged. Later, the SI asked him to withdraw the case but he denied the proposal. At one stage, SI Kamal gave him a good beating in the hajat room and threatened to send him to jail after filing a drug possessing

case against him, alleged Jamal in the statement.

Following the day, the police officer produced Jamal before the Upazila Nirbahi Officer, also executive magistrate, showing him arrested in a case for possessing two Yaba tablets. The magistrate asked for producing him before a mobile court. It was done accordingly but the magistrate acquitted him of the charges as there was no witness or evidence, said Jamal.

However, the police officer then sent him to the jail hajat through a judicial magistrate court in the drug case. Spending 18 days in the jail hajat, he got bail, Jamal claimed.

Jamal said police recovered his sister Marufa Khatun's hanging body at her husband's house at Rajapur village on April 7, 2006. Later on April 9, Jamal filed the murder case accusing 13 of her father-in-law's family. Sub-Inspector Moloy submitted a charge sheet against six of them in the murder case.

Contacted yesterday, SI Kamal Hossain refuted the allegation and said Jamal is "an addict" and he had filed the case against Jamal after recovery of two Yaba tablets from him.