

BNP marks Khaleda's 73rd birthday through doa mahfil

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday celebrated its chairperson Khaleda Zia's 73rd birthday through holding a doa and milad mahfil instead of cutting any cake.

The milad mahfil was held at the party's Napatyan central office around 11:30am.

The party leaders said they did not cut any cake on the occasion as thousands of people are suffering through immense grief in the country's flood-affected areas.

The party celebrated her 72nd birthday last year also through holding a doa mahfil instead of cutting any cake on the same ground.

Speaking at the milad mahfil, party standing committee member Mirza Abbas said, "Today [Tuesday] is the 73rd birthday of our leader Khaleda Zia. As a severe flood has affected the country, putting people in danger, our leader [Khaleda] asked us not to celebrate her birthday with any 'party programme'."

"So, we've kept our today's programme limited to doa and religious rituals. Under the current situation of the country, we shouldn't celebrate the occasion in a joyous manner," he added.

Through the doa mahfil, Abbas said, they are praying to Allah for the early recovery of their chairperson who underwent a surgery in her right eye last week.

Earlier, a munajat was offered seeking divine blessings for Khaleda's long and healthy life, and seeking salvation of the departed souls of party founder Ziaur Rahman and his younger son Arafat Rahman Koko.

Earlier at a press briefing, party senior joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said they did not take any programme to celebrate their chairperson's birthday as she has been in London while the country is suffering from flood.

He added they were arranging milad mahfils across the country and also distributing relief materials.

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The centuries-old pond next to the Shahi Mosque in the capital's Lalmaia is being maintained with care.

PHOTOS: RASHED SHUMON

Once Dhaka was adorned with several hundred ponds. Like canals, only a handful exist now. But they are also in death throes due to negligence of the authorities concerned. Although, according to the Playground, Open Space, Park and Natural Water Body Protection Act 2000, filling up of any water body including pond is illegal, it's going unabated. The Daily Star found 63 ponds in the maps of unwatered Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) in its 28 wards out of 90. A survey for the map was carried out between 2003 and 2011. But many of the water bodies were filled up before the period and also even after the survey. We are publishing the eighteenth report of the series today covering the then DCC ward 40 and 41.

Preserved with love

HELEMLULAM

Sujan's eyes were filled with determination. Patiently, the ninth-grader stood by the edge of the water while the afternoon sun shone brightly upon him.

Suddenly, he felt a tug at the end of his fishing line, attached to a hook. He tried hard to reel the catch in. Two of his friends, standing next to him, were jolled in.

The boys were pulling with all their might by simultaneously lifting the rod vertically while summing up and reeling. But all of their efforts went in vain as the cord broke.

"It must have been a big one," said the



student of Pole-star School, wiping off sweat from his forehead.

Though unsuccessful, this was no bitter-sweet in his voice. Even his friends were congratulating him for his effort.

They started fishing again in the pond next to the Shahi Mosque in the capital's Lalmaia.

"We often come here after school," said Arif

Hossain, a class-VIII student of Anup Mission Pilot School in Lalmaia. He said he caught a half-kg fish already.

Right away Sujan, who was fixing his hook, said, "The one I caught last week was almost 1kg."

The boys were fishing on the western side of the pond.

The pond is full of fish. It is being maintained with care by the authorities of Lalmaia Shahi Mosque. Several including students bathe in it on a regular basis.

It has been said that the pond is there since the time of Mughal Subahdar (governor) of Bengal Shaista Khan.

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A SIGN OF HOPE



The reservoirs inside the Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University are being used for irrigation and fish cultivation.

The capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area is still adorned with many ponds and most of them are being maintained with care.

There used to be eight ponds in the area. Six of them are still alive while the other two were lost to urban sprawl.

4 POND AT AGRI UNIV

There used to be four ponds inside the Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University. Of them, three are being maintained and used for fish cultivation and irrigation. The fourth one was filled up to construct

an administrative building of the university.

The university was established in 1938 and the reservoirs were there since then.

POND NEAR FAZILATUNNESA HALL

The around 1.25-acre pond near the faculty of agri-business management is mainly used for irrigation and cultivating fish.

POND AT SHEIKH HASINA HALL

The pond beside the Sheikh Hasina Hall is surrounded by coconut trees. It is fenced and there are benches by its banks for people to sit.

"We also use the pond for irrigation research," said the proctor.

POND NEAR AGRI FACULTY

The around 1.25-acre pond near the faculty of agri-business management is mainly used for irrigation and cultivating fish.

POND AT SHEIKH HASINA HALL

The pond beside the Sheikh Hasina Hall is surrounded by coconut trees. It is fenced and there are benches by its banks for people to sit.

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The earth, left on a portion of the capital's Khilgaon flyover is now turning into mud and spilling onto the road, impeding vehicular movement. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

ACC boss seeks vigorous anti-graft movement

UNB, Dhaka

Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Iqbal Mahmood yesterday urged all to wage a vigorous anti-corruption movement in the country upholding the spirit and ideology of Father of the Nation Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"Bangladesh had said education must be stopped, farmers and labourers are not involved in corruption, but educated people indulge in corruption. Bangladesh had asked public officials to remain honest," he told a discussion at the ACC head office marking the National Mourning Day.

Mahmood said a ministry will become free from corruption if its secretary is supported by others not to tolerate corruption.

Noting that the ACC is an important institution of the state, he said, if its officials keep themselves away from corruption, the status of the national anti-graft agency will be upheld and then the ideology of Bangladesh will reflect on the institution. "If we want to pay homage to Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, we have to perform our duty sincerely and honestly," the ACC Chief said.

ACC commissioners Dr Nasir Uddin Ahmed and ANM Amimul Islam and its Director General Dr Shamsul Arefin, among others, spoke on the occasion.

Chopping a branch you're sitting on!

FROM PAGE 3

In the breached portions of the embankment already and they will dump 6,000 more soil-filled polythene-sewn bags there once the piling work is complete.

Dhuroil Union Council Chairman Kajim Uddin expressed frustration over the WDB's cutting topsoil from the embankment instead of bringing in necessary materials to protect it. "It will create further risk in future. Locals are disappointed at the initiative."

When all beets and low-lying areas of the souls of Bangladesh are flooded in the last 48 hours and agricultural farms, especially the betel leaf farms, incur heavy losses, the WDB officials were not doing anything to

control the situation, he alleged.

Yakub Ali, a betel leaf orchard owner from Gougangang village said, "Since planting of the betel leaf plants, it takes around five years of care before being able to reap harvest."

Loss from a 10-batha betel leaf orchard could amount to Tk 10 lakh as years of investment is involved, said Muktar Hossain, an orchard owner from Bajel Jo village.

Locals said betel leaves are among the main cash crops in the upazila.

Shukla nirbahi officer of Mohanpur, Shukla Sarker, said, "Since planting of upazila affected croplands was 220 hectares and they would soon complete the assessment of fresh inundated areas."

Bangladesh

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali and State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam were reed out before the audience.

The head of missions, other officials and the members of the Bangladesh community took part in the discussions.

Special prayers were offered seeking salvation and external peace of the members of the Bangladesh community took part in the discussions.

Special prayers were offered seeking salvation and external peace of the members of his family who were brutally assassinated on the black night of 15 August 1975.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has observed the 42nd death anniversary of Bangladesh.

NEWS IN brief

'Missing' college student's body recovered in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka yesterday recovered the body of a student of Polka College, with its hands and legs tied up, from a house in Barabag area of the capital's Mirpur.

At Amin, 25, is an honours third-year student of the college.

Quoting the house owner, Mollah Jasim Uddin, additional deputy commissioner (ADC) of police, Mirpur division, told The Daily Star that two youths had rented the house on Monday afternoon.

Finding the house, situated near the National Heart Foundation Hospital, locked from inside since morning, the owner informed the police. Police around 5:00pm discovered the body from inside and sent it to Dhaka Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

Ibrahim Khalil, who lived with Al Amin at a mess in Mouchak area, said Al Amin went 'missing' three days back and they filed a general diary with Shahjahanpur Police Station. Two days back, Al Amin called his father and wanted Tk 1 lakh for saving his life, he said. Later, they found his mobile phone switched off.

11 hurt in Kurigram BCL infighting during mourning day rally

UNB, Kurigram

At least 11 leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) were injured in a factional clash during a rally marking National Mourning Day in Ulupur upazila yesterday morning.

Officer-in-Charge of Ulupur Police Station SK Abdullah Al Sayed said the local administration brought out a rally in the upazila headquarters marking the day.

Leaders and activists of Ulupur upazila unit of BCL, the student wing of ruling Awami League, also joined the rally.

At one stage, two groups of BCL men locked in a clash and swooped on each other with sharp weapons, leaving at least 11 injured, said the OC.

Police charged baton and lobbed teargas canisters to bring the situation under control, he said.

The injured were taken to local hospitals.

Cuet student goes missing at Sitakunda beach

CUJ CORRESPONDENT

A student of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET) went missing while bathing at Gariakhal beach in Sitakunda upazila of Chittagong yesterday.

Nakib Mohammad Khabarab - a 13th batch student of civil engineering at CUET, went traceless around 1:30pm while bathing at the beach with his six friends, said CUET Public Relation Officer Rashed Hossain.

The weather was gusty at the time, said Rashed.

Being informed, members of Fire Service and Civil Defence rushed to the spot and started a search-and-rescue operation. Till filing of this report, the rescuers could not trace Nakib.

Coast Guard man with 3,000 Yaba pills arrested in Ctg

DETECTIVE BRANCH

Detective Branch (DB) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police arrested two members including a Coast Guard (east zone) member and seized 3,000 Yaba tablets from their possession in Barik Baidia area of the city yesterday.

The arrestees are Laif Mia, 28, a crew member of Coast Guard vessel MV Tanvir, and his associate Akter Hossain, 28, said Additional Deputy Commissioner (South) Humayun Kabir of DB.

Bangabandhu the epitome

FROM PAGE 3

of sacrifice..." said Prof Harun. "In his book, Bangabandhu said sacrifice is a must for loving the country and people..." he VC said.

The political ideologies of Bangladesh are not present among the politicians nowadays, although many of his followers claim that they believe in those, he added. Prof Shamsuzzaman Khan, a crew general of Bangladesh, also spoke.

When all beets and low-lying areas of the souls of Bangladesh are flooded in the last 48 hours and agricultural farms, especially the betel leaf farms, incur heavy losses, the WDB officials were not doing anything to

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