



Sultana Kamal speaks at the "Bidyapeeth Baithaki-3" event.

PHOTOS: STAR

'Ostracise those who defy Bangabandhu'

Says Dr Kamal

UNB, Dhaka

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday called upon people to put up a strong resistance against those creating obstacles towards implementing Bangabandhu's dreams of establishing democracy and ensuring free and fair elections in the country.

"Bangabandhu's first dream was to establish democracy. He also gave the highest importance to ensuring free and fair elections," he said.

Speaking at a discussion, Dr Kamal also said those hampering democracy and the path to fair elections are disrespecting Bangabandhu. "They're also defying Bangabandhu. We must identify them and ostracise them."

Gono Forum arranged the discussion at the Supreme Court Bar Association auditorium, marking the 99th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Dr Kamal said the country's 16 crore people are united over some basic issues, including the "restoration of true democracy", the rule of law and ensuring credible elections. "Ensuring a free and fair election is a demand of all. There's no controversy over the matter. But it's not happening. We should identify those hampering it at every locality," he said.

Dr Kamal deplored that many of Bangabandhu's dreams remained unimplemented even after 47 years of independence.

Tales of unsung struggles

Volunteers of Liberation War-time hospital share memories

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Contribution of women in the 1971 Liberation War has not yet been recognised even after 47 years of independence, said freedom fighter and human rights activist Sultana Kamal yesterday.

"Till date, we have to distinguish the important contribution of women in the Liberation War," she said.

She said this at a dialogue on "Women in Liberation War: Bangladesh Hospital, Bismariganj 1971" organised by Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation at Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Bidyapeeth in Dhanmondi.

During the Liberation War, Sultana Kamal, Saeeda Kamal, Minu Billah, Khuku Ahmed, Asma Nisar and Reshma Amin provided treatment to wounded freedom fighters at Bangladesh Hospital in Bismariganj of India.

They narrated how they left the country

risking their lives and carried out their service amid numerous obstacles at the hospital.

"We passed several nights in a deep forest on a bed of polythene. Insects ran beneath it. We didn't have any pillows. We used to roll our clothes as a substitute," said Saeeda.

We passed several nights in a deep forest on a bed of polythene. Insects ran beneath it. We didn't have any pillows. We used to roll our clothes as a substitute

Minu said, "We ate only rice and bread. Often, worms were found in these."

Asma worked at the medicine department while her younger sister Reshma was posted at surgery department.

Reshma said during the surgery, one had to hold a hurricane lamp all the time.

Khuku, wife of Bir Pratik Dr Maj (ret'd) Akhtar Ahmed, narrated how they gave

treatment to injured freedom fighters with resource constraints and limited training.

"We became like a family," she said.

Director General of the Foundation Dr Ahrar Ahmad delivered a welcome speech at the event.

Justice continues to elude Parag, family

6 years after his abduction, legal process at stalemate as witnesses fear backlash

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Six-year-old Parag made national headlines when he was abducted in broad daylight, leaving his mother, sister and driver of their car with gunshot injuries, right in front of his house in 2013.

While he was found alive in the same locality three days later, his family is far from getting justice, with the case drifting along for over six years, and the family and witnesses still not feeling safe enough to testify.

At the latest hearing of the case for recording witness statements yesterday, Parag's family members did not appear to testify at the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-4. The court of Judge Tabassum Islam set September 23 for recording witness statement. It also issued a production warrant against one of the accused, as he was absent.

The case of Parag's abduction was filed with Dakkhin Keraniganj Police Station by his grandmother Sabitri Mondol on November 11, the same day Parag was picked up. So far, only two witnesses out of 48 have testified to the court.

Of the 12 accused, eight are on bail, two have jumped bail, and one fled from

prison. One of the accused (who was on bail) died in July 2017, while another (who had jumped bail) was killed in an alleged gunfight with police, according to police records. Five of the accused have admitted to the crime in confessional statements to the court.

"Witnesses are not appearing before the court despite being summoned several times due to security concerns, as many of the accused are on bail; they still live in the locality and are involved with criminal activities," said one of the key witnesses, wishing not to be named.

Parag's father Bimol Chandra Mondol said, "We appeared before the court on the first two dates, but could not give statements," adding, "We feel unsafe as all alive accused are on bail."

Parag gave a judicial statement to the court on February 27, 2013 describing his abduction. Police filed a charge-sheet against 12 for kidnapping Parag and shooting his mother, sister and their car driver on March 21 the same year, and charges were framed against them by the court on October 23.

The trial saw a lengthy delay after the High Court stayed trial for four months, following a petition by an accused on June 15, 2014.

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Concord to hold art competition on Mar 26



Organisers at the press conference.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

CITY DESK

An art competition for children will be held at Fantasy Kingdom Complex in Ashulia on March 26.

The event titled "Polar Ice Cream Moner Sukhe Aki" will be organised by Concord Entertainment Ltd and Dhaka Ice Cream Industries Ltd, said a press release.

A total of 1,200 children aged five to sixteen will participate in three groups -- with 400 children in each group. Last year, 800 children participated in the event.

Children can choose any subject and medium for their painting, the release said.

The registration started on March 16 and will continue till March 23.

After registration, applicants will receive a confirmation code in a SMS. All appli-

cants must show the code at the gate of Fantasy Kingdom Complex.

Only one guardian will be allowed with each participant. All participants will get free entry, rides and lunch.

Renowned artist Mostafa Monowar and a group of experienced teachers and students of Charukala will be present as judges. They will choose 10 participants from each group.

A total of 30 children will be awarded based on their performance, including 3 gold medals, 3 silver medals, 3 bronze medals. Certificates and crests will also be given.

Participants can register on bit.ly/monershukheaki

Details can be found on the Facebook page of Polar ice cream or Fantasy Kingdom Complex.

Private car driver shot dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals gunned down a private car driver in Dhaka's Merul Badda area last night.

The victim was identified as Julhash Mollah, 35.

Two youths -- aged between 20 and 25 - shot Julhash soon after he get out of a medicine store in the area around 9pm, said Inspector Bachchu Mia, camp-in-charge of Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the victim was taken after the incident.

Julhash's elder sister Somo Meher told reporters at DMCH that the criminals shot her brother right in front of her and fled the scene.

Doctors at the hospital declared Julhash dead after he was taken to DMCH.

Officer-in-Charge of Badda Police Station Rafiqul Islam said on Sunday night they arrested three criminals along with a pistol and two bullets while two managed to flee.

"We suspect the two, who managed to escape, shot Julhash believing he helped police arrest them," the OC said.

The OC further said Julhash was once involved with drug peddling along with those who were arrested.



Police visit the crime scene in Chattogram Court's storeroom yesterday, where valuable evidence were stolen the previous night. They are now working on a list of missing items. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Bangladesh rejects US report on human rights

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has rejected the US State Department's 2018 country reports on human rights practices, claiming that a chunk of information there is "by and large" more applicable to United States than Bangladesh.

"I have enough doubt about their investigation. We welcome reports that are objective and fact-based," Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen said yesterday at a media briefing at Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He said Bangladesh has already sent a protest note to US authorities in this regard.

Talking about election issues in the US and Bangladesh, he said Bangladesh practises better democracy than others.

US Secretary of State Michael R Pompeo formally released the 2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices recently.

The report highlighted various rights issues and reported abuses, including irregularities in Bangladesh's last national election.

Evidence theft in Ctg court storeroom

Two cops suspended for negligence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two police constables were suspended yesterday after unidentified miscreants stole evidence and valuables from the storeroom of Chattogram district court.

The suspended constables are Md Kayes and Md Moniurrazman of Chattogram district police, said court sources.

Chattogram Court Inspector Bijan Barua said the burglary came to light yesterday morning. "In-charge of the storeroom found a new padlock when he tried to enter it before court hour. He then informed the matter to me," he said.

Bijan said after the incident, he informed the magistrate and cut the new padlock in presence of the officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station and others.

"After cutting the lock, the room was found ransacked, and valuable evidence was missing," said Inspector Bijan, adding that police were preparing a list of the missing items.

Court sources said there is no CCTV camera in the storeroom. Inspector Bijan said two police constables were on duty last night and they have been suspended over alleged negligence in their duties.

Two-year jail for fish adulteration

Cabinets okays draft law

BSS, Dhaka

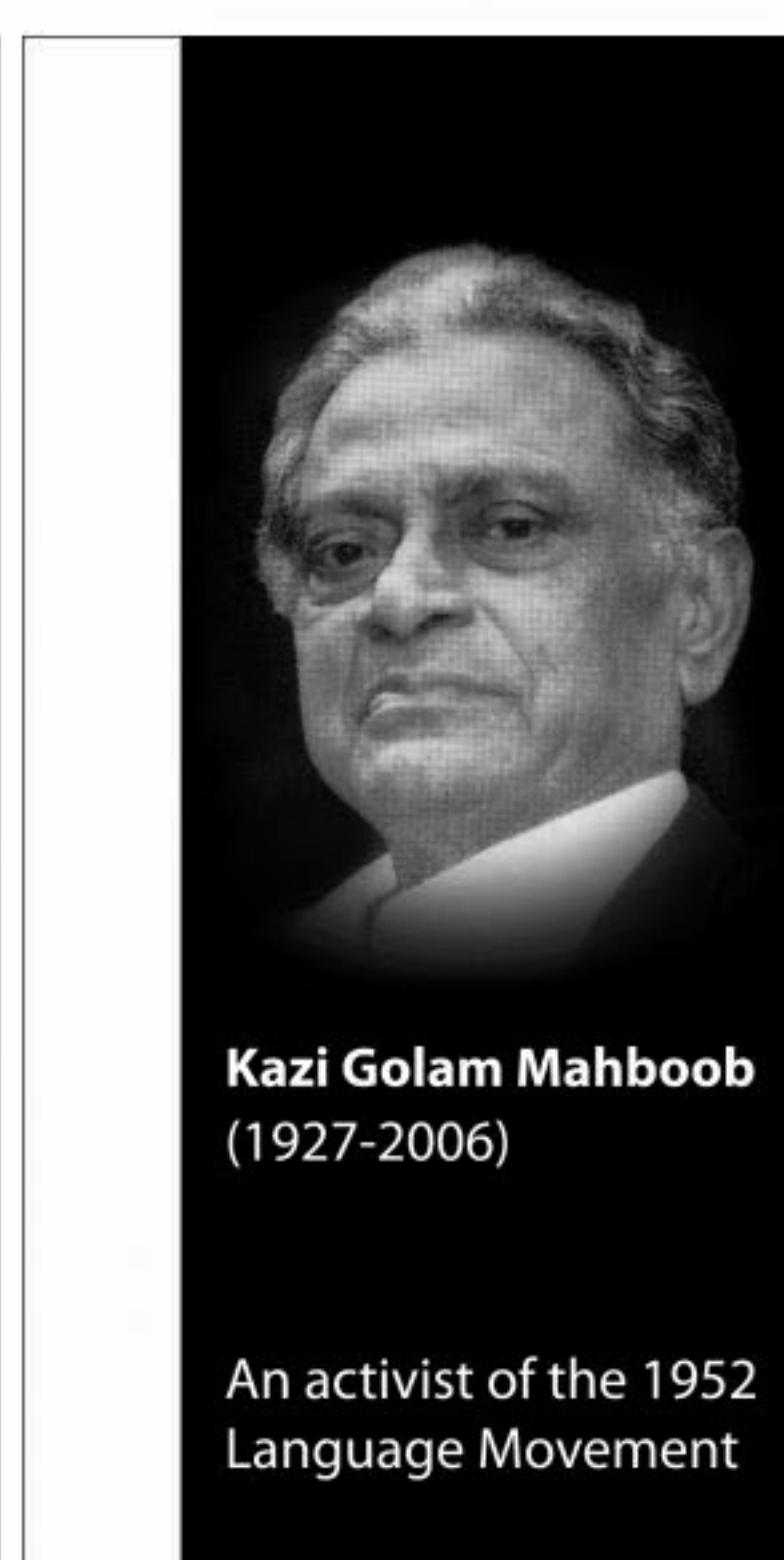
The cabinet yesterday, in principle, approved a draft law raising jail terms for adulterated fish production and marketing from three months to two years in its weekly meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

"The cabinet approved the draft of Fish and Fish Products (Inspection and Quality Control) Act 2019 to strengthen monitoring to ensure fish quality at production and marketing levels," Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiqul Alam told a news briefing.

He said under the proposed law, one would face jail terms up to two years, which was previously three months. "The new law would stop adulteration and help maintain quality of fish and fish products," he said.

At the meeting, a book titled "Bangla Bhashar Bangabandhu", a collection of writings on Bangabandhu's contribution to the Language Movement and promotion

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Kazi Golam Mahboob (1927-2006)

An activist of the 1952 Language Movement

Our father Kazi Golam Mahboob will be remembered for his role as a lawyer, philosopher, visionary, politician, convener of the language movement but most importantly as a great husband and father.

We are eternally grateful for the wonderful example he set for us and our future generations. He was a man of character - his patriotism, faith and endurance during our nations difficult years truly defined him.

Our nation has had great heroes; we need to respect their sacrifices and raise our children to emulate their virtues. We miss and love our father very dearly!

A milad mahfil and prayer congregation will be held in Dhaka and at his birthplace Gournadi, Barisal.

- Family Members