

## Nazrul

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The poet's birth anniversary will be celebrated at educational institutions across the country. Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar and private television channels will air special programmes and newspapers will bring out special supplements highlighting the poet's life and works.

On the 11th Jaishtha in 1306 in Bangla calendar, Nazrul was born in Churulia near Asansol in West Bengal's Burdwan district. He was famous for his poem Bidrohi (The Rebel) and his many melodious songs. He was a poet, lyricist, musician, revolutionary and philosopher.

The nation drew inspiration from Nazrul's poems and songs during the Liberation War and democratic movements and struggles.

There are 2,400 of his songs, and together they are known as Nazrul Geeti or Nazrul Sangeet.

After the country's independence, Nazrul was declared the national poet and he was brought to Dhaka from Kolkata. He died here in 1976.

## Huge deposit

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assistant at the University of Texas Institute for Geophysics and lead author of the new study. "That likely makes it the third largest water reservoir on Mars after the polar ice caps."

Scientists have hypothesized that the layers of ice formed on Mars during past ice ages and were protected from periods of warming by sand that covered their surface and protected from solar radiation.

While scientists have long surmised Mars' past glacial activity, which were influenced by the planet's tilting and wobbling toward or away from the sun over the periods of about 50,000 years, ice caps were thought to have disappeared from Mars entirely.

Instead, much of that ice was locked inside the planet's surface, say researchers.

"Surprisingly, the total volume of water locked up in these buried polar deposits is roughly the same as all the water ice known to exist in glaciers and buried ice layers at lower latitudes on Mars, and they are approximately the same age," Nerozzi said.

Research has implications on not only how Mars looks today, but also how the red planet's climate may have, in the past, been conducive to life as we know it on Earth.

"Understanding how much water was available globally versus what's trapped in the poles is important if you're going to have liquid water on Mars," Nerozzi said.

"You can have all the right conditions for life, but if most of the water is locked up at the poles, then it becomes difficult to have sufficient amounts of liquid water near the equator."

As the prospects of human space colonisation become more and more serious, the habitability of Mars by humans is becoming an area of greater interest by both private and public parties.

Nasa recently awarded one company a \$500,000 grand prize for designing the concept for a human-ready habitat that could be produced and replicated on Mars using 3D printing.

## Court orders

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Kamruzzaman, an expatriate in Saudi Arabia, facing domestic violence charges.

Police conducted a raid in the area on information that Kamruzzaman returned home. But there was a misunderstanding as fathers' name of both Liton and Kamruzzaman are same, the SI claimed.

When police went to Liton's house, the frightened man tried to flee. At that time, he fell off from the roof of his tin-shed house and injured himself critically, the SI added.

Liton died on May 9, 15 days after the incident.

His mother alleged that police made up the story to protect Kamruzzaman.

Kulsum Akter, Liton's sister, alleged that an UP member in the area was behind the police raid. The UP member is an accomplice of a man who had borrowed Tk 150,000 from Liton and never paid back.

Abul Kashem, chairman of Barobaria Union Parishad, said, "As far as I know, Liton Mia had no criminal record."

The probe body of Mymensingh district police is headed by SA Newazi, additional superintendent of the district police. The committee also includes Additional Superintendent of Police (Gafargaon circle) Ali Haider Chowdhury and Inspector Muklesur Rahman of the district police's special branch.

The court asked the probe body to submit its reports within seven working days.



A woman holds a placard reading 'Save the planet' yesterday as demonstrators march during a protest against global warming in Lausanne. Several thousand people in cities across Switzerland take part in a protest against climate change, inspired by Swedish youth activist Greta Thunberg. PHOTO: AFP

# Her war wasn't over in 1971

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camp during the Liberation War.

She was not talking that much and her response was short and precise when this reporter visited her home recently.

The war heroine recalled that another phase of her struggle began once her husband denied accepting her after the war.

"There was no respect for me in the society after returning from the Pakistani camp," she said bitterly.

On how she lived her life in those extremely unbearable days, Tepri said, "After the death of my parents, I used to collect vegetables to feed my family. Later, I somehow managed a job at a local rice mill. I was paid Tk 5 per day in those days."

Tepri now mostly confines herself to a small room. Her son Sudhir said

his mother has gained some respect from the local community after the government's recognition.

### OVERCOMING THE ODDS

Tepri was the third of four offspring of Mudiram Barman and Duto Rani Barman.

She got married to Matang Roy, a local youth, in early 1971. She was living with her parents when the Liberation War began in March that year, said her younger brother Ramesh, then aged 13.

After the beginning of the war, their parents were desperately looking for a safe place. The family took shelter at a neighbour's house, but could not escape the eyes of the Pakistan army and their collaborators, Ramesh said recently while narrating the frightful events.

"It was the month of May. We were

staying at a neighbour's house. Some army men picked up Tepri holding us hostage. They took her to their camp in Sialdangi village.

"They tortured my sister for three days and then let her go. But a few days later they again took her to their camp. There she was subjected to all forms of abuse and violence for six months," Ramesh told this paper.

After the war was over, Tepri's husband Matang refused to accept her as his wife.

In March 1972, she gave birth to a son. But the villagers stigmatised the baby as well.

Her parents tried to marry her off again but found none willing to tie the knot. So Tepri started working at a rice mill.

For the next 10 years, she worked as a day labourer and nurtured her child.

Her son Sudhir could not go to school due to financial constraints. He started supporting his mother when he turned 10.

Now a proud father of two daughters, Sudhir earns his livelihood pulling a rikshaw van. Of her two daughters, Purnima Roy is married while Jana-ta Roy is studying.

"I am proud of my mother. She saved her family, she saved me," Sudhir told this correspondent.

As a freedom fighter, Tepri started getting a monthly allowance of Tk 10,000 from March last year.

"The present government has recognised her sacrifices, but she is yet to receive a certificate that would solidify her identity as a freedom fighter," her son Sudhir said, urging the government to make a move in this regard.

# Potato glut badly hurts growers

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prospect of exporting local varieties. We are also looking at ways to strengthen our lab facilities to export disease free potatoes. We will submit a report to the ministry soon."

Russia and the European Union were potential markets for Bangladeshi potatoes, but those opportunities ended in 2015-16 when Russia found diseases in potatoes exported from Bangladesh and issued a temporary ban.

The Russian Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance said the potatoes from Bangladesh were infected by brown rot disease and potato tuber moth, as there is no accredited or standard lab in Bangladesh to test the quality of potatoes.

Bangladesh's export of potato, the world's fourth largest food crop after maize, wheat, and rice, reached a record high of over 100,000 tonnes in 2013-14, plummeting to 53,000 tonnes last year. It was 27,811.6 tonnes till April this year.

Manzurul Hannan, managing director of Hortex Foundation (Horticulture Export Development Foundation), said processed potato is the future of Bangladesh. "Yes, we could not increase our potato exports. But, last year, we exported potato flakes and crackers worth Tk 30 lakh to 26 countries."

Hannan, also a former director general of DAE, said some chips and crackers companies are also interested in processed potatoes and have started expanding their capacities.

"We hope the situation will improve within a year as scientists

are working on the quality of the potatoes. Besides, the government is also paying special attention to it," he added.

Bangladesh exports potatoes to Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Benin, Vietnam, Canada, Bahrain, Qatar, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Kuwait, Brunei, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Singapore.

Russia has a demand for 2.6 crore tonnes of potatoes a year, facing a shortage of 50 lakh tonnes, said market sources. Bangladesh exported more than 20,000 tonnes of the crop to Russia -- out of 103,000 tonnes of potatoes exported in 2013-14 -- according to the agriculture ministry.

In 2015, Russia stopped importing from Bangladesh and suggested the latter to upgrade its phytosanitary system, security measures to prevent the use of fake phytosanitary certificates, and maintain proper inspection at ports to ensure shipment of safe agricultural produce.

The production of potatoes is increasing gradually in Bangladesh, and so is the surplus, according to data from DAE.

Shamsul Alom, deputy director (export) of the plant quarantine wing of DAE, said, the DAE has taken up contact farming in some places, to attract foreign buyers. "If we can produce good quality potatoes through good practices, buyers will certainly be interested."

Kazi Munni, owner of Refat Enterprise and joint secretary of Bangladesh Potato Exporters Association, said, "Russia should not be our target market as it takes 70 days for the potatoes to reach there by ship.

YEAR	CULTIVABLE LAND (IN LAKH HECTARES)	PRODUCTION (IN LAKH TONNES)	EXPORT (IN TONNES)
2012-2013	4.44	86.03	28,416
2013-2014	4.62	89.50	102,983.564
2014-2015	4.71	92.83	90,490.967
2015-2016	4.75	94.47	40,239.405
2016-2017	4.99	102.16	55,652.38
2017-2018	4.77	97.44	53,485.639
2018-2019	4.69	109	27,811.602 (till April)

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION (DAE).

We should focus more on markets in Asia and the Middle East."

The product standard and quality that the European Union and Russia demand is very high and ultimately too expensive and not feasible for Bangladeshi farmers, she added.

"There is also a section of dishonest businessmen who are exporting low quality products and creating a negative image of the country. There should be strict export guidelines in place."

Khawza Mia, a potato farmer in Rohobol village of Shibganj Upazila in Bogura, said they got good prices for their produce two years ago. "But ever since, prices have been falling."

Farmers in Bogura grew potatoes on 57,000 hectares of land this year and harvested 12,82,500 tonnes of the tuber crop.

"We now sell a kilogram of potato for Tk 10, which was Tk 40 two years ago. If this situation continues, we will have to shift to farming other crops."

Farmers in Munshiganj, a potato farming hub in the country, grew the

crop on 38,300 hectares of land this season, and got a yield of around 13 lakh tonnes.

Sirajul Islam Mir, a farmer in Katakhal village of the district, said he produced 700 maunds of potatoes this year. He sold a maund for Tk 310, against a production cost of Tk 360.

"Instead of selling my produce, I stored 170 maunds in my house for the low price. But even those are rotting by the day. In the last four years, I counted losses of almost Tk 22 lakh for potato farming," he said.

Awlad Hossain, another farmer in the village, spent Tk 170,000 to grow potatoes earlier this year, but he got only Tk 130,000 in return.

Humayun Kabir, deputy director of the district DAE, said there are 68 cold storages in the district with a capacity of around 5.5 lakh tonnes.

"Those are currently keeping around four lakh tonnes of potatoes. Farmers are not interested in selling them as market prices are low," he added.

# US official urges Pacific Island nations to keep ties with Taiwan

REUTERS, Sydney

Pacific Island countries that have diplomatic ties with Taiwan should maintain them in the face of "heavy handed" attempts by China to reduce Taiwan's overseas contacts, a top US official said yesterday.

US Acting Assistant Secretary for Southeast Asia W. Patrick Murphy also said the United States was keen to help Pacific countries protect their sovereignty, in a region where the United States and its allies are competing for influence with China.

"Our encouragement on countries that have relations with Taiwan is to maintain the status quo," Murphy told reporters in Canberra, on a three-day visit to Australia.

China claims self-ruled and democratic Taiwan as sacred Chinese territory and merely a province with no right to state-to-state ties.

Taiwan is one of a growing number of flashpoints in the US-China relationship, which include a trade war, US sanctions and China's increasingly muscular military posture in the South China Sea.

"China is changing (the) status quo, and the Pacific is a good example where China is attempting to reduce Taiwan's diplomatic relations in the region," Murphy said.

"And that's kind of heavy handed." "Countries should be able to make their own independent choices of their partners in diplomatic relations, and do so on the basis of domestic ingredients, not foreign influence."

China has offered to help developing countries including in the Pacific, and many see Chinese lending as the best bet to develop their economies.

But critics say Chinese loans can lead countries into a "debt trap".

Murphy said the United States was very keen to help countries "protect their sovereignty and their independence, to have viable alternatives and options to meet their development needs, their infrastructure needs, and their nation building needs".

## India bans JMB

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Burdwan in West Bengal on October 2, 2014 and Bodh Gaya in Bihar on January 19, 2018.

The police in Assam also said they found involvement of the JMB in five cases registered by them and a total of 56 accused belonging to JMB were arrested.

According to the home ministry notification, the JMB came into existence in 1998 with the objective of establishing a Caliphate through Jihad.

The JMB was engaged in recruitment and raising funds for terrorist activities, procurement of explosive chemicals and assembling of improvised explosive device, it said.

Investigations have also revealed JMB's plan of making permanent bases within 10 kilometres along the India-Bangladesh border in several districts of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura and plans of spreading its network in South India with an overarching motive to establish Caliphate in the Indian subcontinent, the notification added.

## 32 held

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town around 5:30am and arrested them.

ASI Mahbubur Rahman of Patuakhali Sadar Circle was sentenced to a month in prison by Executive Magistrate Ummey Habiba after he was caught passing on answers to a jobseeker during the recruitment test at Patuakhali Rashid Kisholoy School.

Mahbubur was in uniform as he provided the multiple choice question answers inside an exam hall, Additional District Magistrate Nurul Hafiz said.

In Pabna, law enforcers arrested four examinees at a mess near Pabna Edward College yesterday morning on charges of attempting to leak the questions.

They had been sent to jail, said Goutam Kumar Biswas, additional superintendent of police in Pabna.

The Directorate of Primary Education is recruiting around 13,000 teachers. Over 24 lakh applications had been submitted for the posts.

About 5.19 lakh jobseekers sat for the test yesterday. Around 5.23 lakh others will sit for the test on May 31, 6.94 lakh on June 21 and 6.63 lakh on June 28.

Correspondents in Satkhira, Patuakhali and Pabna contributed to this report.

## Two held

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Begumganj OC Firoze Alam Molla said Harun, Saiful and Babu were accused of rape and some 60 to 70 unidentified people of vandalism.

"Babu and Saiful, both aged 30, were held this [yesterday] morning with arms and ammo. Raids are underway to arrest Harun," the OC said.

Abdul Azim, residential medical officer at Noakhali General Hospital, said samples had been collected from the victim to run necessary medical tests.