



Thousands of devotees throng the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal, with decorative 'gilaf'.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

700th Urs begins at Shahjalal's shrine

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The 700th Urs (death anniversary) of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA), one of the most prominent Muslim sufi saints, began at his shrine in Sylhet yesterday morning.

Like every year, thousands of devotees from all over the country marched towards the shrine on the occasion since morning holding "Gilaf", a decorated colourful fabric to be placed on the mausoleum.

The two-day programme will end this morning, through prayers and distribution of food.

Other programmes at the event include offering fateha, Qurankhwani, zikirajker and milad mahfil.

A three-day fair also takes place around the shrine surrounding the Urs every year.

Meanwhile, Sylhet Metropolitan Police has beefed up security at the shrine in adjacent areas, said Zedan Al Musa, additional deputy commissioner of SMP.

Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) came to Sylhet from Yemen in the year 1303, and died in 1346, and is credited with the spread of Islam in erstwhile north-eastern Bengal and Assam.

His uncle and spiritual mentor Shah Kabir died on the 19th of Arabic month Julkad in 1320.

Hazrat Shahjalal began observing the Urs for his uncle that year, and he also died on the same day after 26 years, in 1346.

PM undergoes eye surgery in London

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina underwent a surgery in her left eye at a London hospital on Monday, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told the news agency from the British capital.

Sheikh Hasina, he said, is doing well after the surgery.

Ihsanul said the prime minister had digitally cleared a number of urgent files from London. He said the PM is also monitoring Bangladesh's flood situation round-the-clock and giving necessary directives to the ministers and officials concerned.

Hasina went to London on July 19 to attend a conference of Bangladesh envoys in Europe and other programmes. She is expected to return home on August 5.

'Earn confidence of people'

President tells public administration officials

UNB, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid yesterday urged government officials to earn the confidence of people regarding availing government services without any lobbying.

"There's a lack of confidence among people when it comes to availing various services from government organisations. You (public servants) need to raise public awareness in this regard," he said. The president said this while addressing the Public Administration Awards 2019 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city.

President Hamid said there is a need for developing a relationship of trust between government officials and people of the country. "Almost all government offices have citizen charters...It's necessary to monitor whether people can avail the government services," he added. The president also said government officials have a greater role in formulating plans and implementing those with due emphasis on public interest. Hamid said many roads and culverts are built in rural areas without proper planning, obstructing the natural flow of water. "In some cases, the quality of construction is so poor that those require reconstruction even before completion of the works."

He further said, "The government has

been implementing various development projects in the country but still we need to do more to ensure the desired progress." Underscoring the need for a transparent, skilled and accountable administration, President Hamid asked the authorities concerned to ensure transparency and accountability at every level to achieve the desired goals of sustainable development.

"The British had introduced public administration in the subcontinent to rule and loot it. Public welfare was not their concern," he said, adding, "Today, we're citizens of an independent country and the main aim of the administration is to serve people. So, there's no alternative to changing the traditional attitude of public servants."

President Hamid said transparency and accountability will have to be ensured at all levels. "Only then the development activities of the government will be sustainable. Remember, administration is for the people and not the other way around." The current government has taken admirable steps in reforming civil service, he said.

Referring to various social problems, the president urged all to stay alert so that opportunists cannot create instability in the country. The National Public Service Day-2019 is being observed with an objective

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Lucy Holt receives Tk one lakh for treatment

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Lucy Helen Frances Holt, 88, has been suffering from illness due to old age in Barishal's Oxford Mission Church residential compound.

She left her home in Britain in 1960 to pursue humanitarian work with Christian missionaries in the then East Pakistan. She stayed back in Bangladesh and served as a nurse at Fatema Hospital in 1971.

In February 2018, the government granted her ultimate wish of being a Bangladeshi citizen.

Sister Holt had joined Oxford Mission Church at the age of 30. She currently teaches English there for free.

One month ago, she tripped and fell near her residence, injuring her hip.

She appealed to the prime minister for medical help on Monday. Following her request, divisional commissioner Ram Chandra Das; deputy commissioner Ojiur Rahman; Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) Director Bakir Hossain, and Civil Surgeon Manowar Hossain went to visit her on Monday afternoon.

Tk 1 lakh was handed over to Sister Holt for her treatment.

Dr Bakir said, "We learnt about her health condition and suggested a complete medical check-up at SBMCH as soon as possible."

Ojiur Rahman said, "We visited Lucy Holt on behalf of the prime minister to inquire about her condition. District administration will help her in every way possible."



BNP's 3rd divisional rally in Khulna tomorrow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

BNP's third divisional rally demanding release of its Chairperson Khaleda Zia will be held in Khulna city tomorrow.

During a press conference at its office on the city's KD Ghosh Road yesterday, Nazrul Islam Monju, central organising secretary and city unit president, spoke about preparations for the gathering to be held at Shaheed Hades Park.

He said they want to pursue a peaceful political programme and sought cooperation from police department.

Khulna City Corporation already gave written consent and Khulna Metropolitan Police gave verbal assurance in this regard, he said.

Alongside the demand for Khaleda's release, the party, during the rally, will reiterate its demand for restoration of democracy in the country, said Monju.

The BNP leader also said their party had sought permission to use loudspeaker for campaign of the rally, but to no avail. Leaflets were distributed among people at ward, thana and union levels, he said.

A total of 12 sub-committees were formed to make the rally successful, he added.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, five of its standing

committee members and many other top leaders will be present at the rally, party sources said.

Addressing the press conference, BNP leaders said the government failed to control the ongoing flood situation.

They said farmers are not getting fair price for their produce, violence against women and children reached an alarming level, and stock market scam, bank loot and money laundering has crossed all limits.

The judiciary and media are not independent nowadays, they said. The rally will also highlight those issues, they added.

SM Shafiqul Alam, president of Khulna district BNP, and Shamimur Rahman Shamim, central assistant publicity secretary, were present at the press conference, among others.

Earlier on July 18, BNP staged its first divisional rally in Barishal city. Hundreds of party leaders and activists of upazila, district, municipality and city levels joined the gathering on Hemayet Uddin Eidgah field.

On July 20, another divisional rally was held in Chattogram. During the programme on the city's Nur Ahmed Road, speakers demanded cancellation of the present Election Commission and formation of a new one.

Budget for Gazipur city announced

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Gazipur City Corporation (GCC) announced its 2019-20 budget on Monday at Bongo Taj Auditorium. Mayor Md Jahangir Alam announced the budget, with estimated income of Tk 6,138.65 crore and total estimated expenditure of Tk 4,762.82 crore.

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque attended the event as chief guest while State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Hasan Russell was special guest.

"I promise to remain accountable to the citizens we serve," said Jahangir Alam.

Lawmaker Shamsunnahar Bhuiyan and high officials of local administration were present at the event.

RESCHEDULING DEFAULT LOANS

HC questions legality of central bank circular

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the legality of a Bangladesh Bank circular that allowed loan defaulters to reschedule their repayment of loans upon a down payment of just two percent of the loan amount, and to get fresh loans.

The court issued a rule asking authorities of the central bank and the government to explain in 10 days why the May 16 circular should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Md Khairul Alam came up with the rule following a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB). It also set July 31 to resume hearing.

Another HC bench on May 21 had issued a status quo on the circular till June 24. The court on June 24 extended the status quo for the next two months.

Following a petition by the finance ministry, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on July 8 stayed the HC order for two months and set a condition

that loan defaulters would not be allowed to get further loans by depositing two percent down payment.

The apex court also asked the HC bench, led by Justice JBM Hassan, to hear and dispose of the petition in two months.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, petitioner's lawyer advocate Manzill Murshid said the July 8 order of the Appellate Division would remain in place.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam appeared for the state.

On February 13, HRPB moved the writ petition, based on which the HC issued a rule asking authorities to explain why their failure or inaction to stop irregularities and corruption in sanctioning loans and offering waiver of interest in the last 20 years should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries to the Cabinet Division, Prime Minister's Office, finance ministry, financial institutions division, law ministry, Bangladesh Bank governor, and the chairmen of the National Board of Revenue and the Anti-Corruption Commission were made respondents to the rule.



In order to raise awareness about the ongoing climate crisis, transgender people and supporters of the cause from seven countries organised a rally at Abahani field in Dhaka's Dhanmondi yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



The Department of Environment in Barishal seizes around 3 tonnes of banned polythene being loaded in a Dhaka-bound truck from in front of a warehouse in city's Bazar Road area yesterday. The DoE team, as part of its drive, seized another 5 tonnes of polythene from the depot and sealed it.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Three killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed in road accidents in two districts during the last two days, according to reports from our correspondents.

Our staff correspondent from Chattogram reports, Mohammad Arif, 35, died as a bus hit him while he was crossing a road in Sobujbagh area of Halishahar yesterday.

He was declared dead at Chattogram Medical College Hospital, CMCH police said.

In another incident, an elderly man was killed when a bus ran him over in Situlpur area of Sitakunda upazila yesterday.

Identity of the deceased could not be known immediately.

Meanwhile, teachers and students of zoology department of Chittagong University yesterday demanded punishment for the driver of a microbus that hit Sadekul Islam, 21, a student of the department, leaving him dead on June 1, reports our CU correspondent.

They formed a human chain in front of CU Central Shaheed Minar.

Our Mymensingh correspondent adds, an assistant sub-inspector, was killed and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Five people die in N'ganj in one day

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Five people died in different upazilas of Narayanganj yesterday.

In Sadar upazila, locals found the body of a youth on Mijmiji Matin road around 8:30am. On information, police recovered the body.

Police are yet to identify the body, which bore several injury marks, said HM Jashim Uddin, inspector (operation) of Siddhirganj Police Station.

Meanwhile, locals found the body of a middle-aged woman in a field in Lalkha area of Fatullah, said Hasanuzzaman, inspector (investigation) of Fatulla Model Police Station.

The deceased was identified as Shefali Begum, 42, from Lalkha area.

In Bandar upazila, Mizan Shikder Mishud, 28, a garment worker, was allegedly killed by two persons on the premises of a school in Nadda around 9am, said Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Bandar Police Station.

The two persons -- Mithu Hossain and Munna Haque -- were arrested and confessed to killing Mizan, OC Rafiqul said.

Meanwhile, Berek Mia, 49, died of electric shock when he came in contact with a live wire in Shantinagar area, said Abu Taleb, sub-inspector of Bandar Police Station, quoting Berek's family.

In Araihaazar upazila, Suruj Mia, 40, a land broker, was killed in front of Fatehpur CD Market around 6:30am.

Suruj had reportedly locked into a clash with three persons -- Abul Mia, Moktar Mia and Rezaul Mia -- over selling a piece of land that belonged to one Gulzar Hossain, said Shafiqul Islam, inspector (investigation) of Araihaazar Police Station, quoting locals.

He was beaten by the three and fell unconscious, the officer said.

Later, locals rescued and took him to a health complex where doctors declared him dead. Police are trying to track the culprits, he added.