

Gaffar Chowdhury to be laid to rest today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prominent journalist, writer and columnist Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury will be buried at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in the capital today.



A flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying his body is scheduled to arrive at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 11:00am. His body is being brought from London under state management, said a foreign ministry press release issued yesterday.

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque will receive the body at the airport.

Later, the body of Gaffar Chowdhury will be kept at the Central Shaheed Minar from 1:00pm to 3:00pm for people from all walks of life to pay tributes to the lyricist of "Amar Bhaier Rokte Rangano". A guard of honour will be given to him.

Around 3:30pm, his namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Dhaka University central mosque.

Then his body will be taken to the Jatiya Press Club at 4:00pm where journalists will pay homage.

Later, Gaffar Chowdhury will be buried at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard around 5:30pm, said the release.

On May 19, the eminent writer and journalist died of a heart attack at a London hospital aged 88.

The British-Bangladeshi community and other admirers paid their last respect to Gaffar Chowdhury after his first namaz-e-janaza was held in London's Brick Lane Mosque the following day.

Taliban dismiss UN concerns on women's rights in Afghanistan

AFP, Kabul

The Taliban yesterday rejected the UN Security Council's call to reverse heavy restrictions imposed on Afghan women, dismissing their concerns as "unfounded".

The Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution on Tuesday that criticised the Taliban for limiting girls' and women's access to education, government jobs and freedom of movement since seizing power last year.

Afghanistan's supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada has also ordered women to cover up -- including their faces -- when in public, triggering international outrage.



A local resident walks past an industrial building damaged by a Russian military strike in the town of Bakhmut, in Donetsk region, Ukraine, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

West has declared 'total war' on Russia

Says FM Lavrov; Moscow presses Donbas assault, claims capture of key Ukrainian town

AGENCIES

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov yesterday accused Western countries of waging a "total war" on Russia and its people and culture as Moscow pushes on with its military operation in Ukraine.

"The West has declared war on us, on the whole Russian world. The culture of cancelling Russia and everything connected with our country is already reaching the point of absurdity," Lavrov said at a ministry meeting.

He accused the West of banning Russian writers, composers and other cultural figures. "It is safe to say that this situation will be with us for a long time," he added.

According to Lavrov, Washington "and its satellites are doubling, tripling, quadrupling their efforts to contain our country".

On the ground, Russia yesterday pressed its deadly offensive to capture key points in the eastern Donbas region of Ukraine, with more bombing of residential areas and pro-Moscow forces claiming the capture

of a key town on the way to Kyiv-controlled territory.

At least nine people were killed in shelling of Ukraine's second-largest city of Kharkiv, raising fears that Russia had not lost interest in the northeastern hub even after Ukraine took back control following fierce battles.

And around 10 people were also killed in Russian strikes on a military facility in the central Ukrainian city of Dnipro.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky reiterated accusations that Moscow was carrying out a "genocide" in Donbas, saying its bombardment could leave the entire region "uninhabited."

Moscow's forces were closing in on several cities in the region including strategically located Severodonetsk and Lysychansk, reports AFP.

Oleksandr Stryuk, the head of the military and civilian administration of Severodonetsk, said two-thirds of its perimeter was already occupied by Russian forces and its chemical factory Azot had been bombed.

"Russia is pressuring the

Severodonetsk pocket although Ukraine retains control of multiple defended sectors, denying Russia full control of the Donbas," the British defence ministry said in its latest briefing.

Pro-Russian separatists said they had captured the town of Lyman that lies between Severodonetsk and Kramatorsk and is on the road leading to the key cities that are still under Kyiv's control.

Concerns are also growing over global food shortages due to the conflict, exacerbating problems for the world's poor at a time of rising energy prices.

Russia said yesterday it was looking to ramp up its production of grain to export in the coming season. "In the current season (2021-2022) we have already exported over 35 million tonnes of grain, including 28.5 million tonnes of wheat," Agriculture Minister Dmitry Patrushev said at a Russian grain forum.

"In the coming season (starting July 1, 2022) we estimate our export potential for grain at 50 million tonnes," he said.

Two land in jail over gang rape of schoolgirl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A Moulvibazar court yesterday sent two people to jail on charges of gang-raping a 10th grader in Kulaura upazila.

The accused, Mukid Miah, 27, and Abdus Sattar, 32, are residents of the same upazila.

According to the case statement, the victim was returning home from school around 4:00pm on Wednesday. Five people, including Mukid and Sattar, intercepted her and forcibly took her to a secluded place and raped her.

After returning home, the girl became sick and shared the incident with her family members.

On Thursday night, the victim's father filed a case against the five with Kulaura Police Station. Police arrested the duo the same night.

Yesterday, the two were produced before the court that sent them to jail, said Binoy Bhushan Roy, officer-in-charge of the police station.

The victim was undergoing treatment at Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital, the OC added.

Police were conducting raids to arrest the other accused.

Road crash claims lives of 2 friends

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Two students died after their motorcycle crashed into a lamp-post near Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital on Thursday night.

The victims are: Gopal Saha, 22, a third-year student of Government BM College, and his friend Antu Saha, 22, a student of Infra Polytechnic Institute.

Azimul Karim, OC of Kotwali Model Police Station, said Gopal was driving the motorcycle. The accident happened around 11:00pm when he lost control and the motorbike hit the lamp-post.

Gopal died on the spot. Doctors declared Antu dead at the Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital, he added.

26 people involved in 'mugging, extorting money' held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion arrested 26 alleged criminals over mugging and extorting money after raiding different areas in the capital on Thursday.

"Several Rab teams raided different spots and arrested them. Sharp weapons and extorted money were recovered during the raids," Bina Rani Das, operations officer of Rab-3, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The arrestees admitted that they have long been extorting Tk 100 to Tk 500 from transport like human haulier, roadside vegetable and fruit shops, and other business outlets, she said.

Besides, some of them used to mug pedestrians, rickshaw-pullers and auto-rickshaw passengers at knife-point, the Rab official added.

After attacks, cases stalk BNP activists

FROM PAGE 1

Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, JCD President Kazi Rawnakul Islam Sraon and General Secretary Saif Mahmud.

"We arrested nine activists of BNP in this case. Eight of them were taken on remand," Salauddin Mia, officer-in-charge of Paltan Police Station, told The Daily Star.

According to the case statement, the BNP men were chanting anti-government slogans, and at one stage, they attacked police and also hurled brick chips. They also attacked two or three moving buses, it read.

However, witnesses said they didn't see any such attack on police or buses.

Talking to this newspaper yesterday, a shopkeeper in the area said the activists marched in procession in front of his shop on Wednesday night. "I didn't see any attack on police or buses by the BNP men."

Another witness said police detained some BNP men from the procession, but he didn't see any act of violence.

In Khulna, police filed a case against around 800 BNP men, including Khulna city BNP Member Secretary Shafiqul Alam Tuhin, in connection with Thursday's clash between local leaders and activists of BNP and BCL men that left over 50 people wounded.

Following the incident, at least 37 BNP men, including Khulna

Metropolitan BNP Member Secretary Shafiqul Alam Tuhin, were arrested.

Biswajit Kumar, sub-inspector of Khulna Sadar Police Station, said he filed the case on Thursday against 92 named people, including Tuhin, and 708 unidentified people.

The case was filed against them for vandalism, obstructing police from discharging duties, and injuring 14 after attacking police, added the official.

Apart from Khulna, BNP men also came under attack in Patuakhali and Manikganj on Thursday while protesting the attack on JCD men in Dhaka.

Talking to this newspaper, BNP leader Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, said "First, they attacked us, now they are filing cases against us. But still we will be in the field with our political programmes."

Contacted, Shahbagh Police Station OC Mowdud Hawlader said they arrested four JCD men over Tuesday's incident on DU campus. Of them, two were held on Thursday and they faced warrants in some previous cases.

Md Kamruzzaman, assistant inspector general (media and public relations) at the Police Headquarters, said when public properties get damaged or any attacks on law enforcers take place, police can file cases. It's a general procedure, he added.

Breaking the glass ceiling

FROM PAGE 1

liveliness but she did not give in.

Last year, she was elected as a union parishad member in Parshodanga union of Pabna's Chatmohar upazila.

Like her, Jamila Begum from Birganj upazila of Dinajpur dispelled the long-held notion of professions that women could work in.

After her husband abandoned her and their two children, she took up butchery. She cleared a debt of Tk 2.82 lakh that her husband owed and built a home in her village.

Takia Sultana Nova, 21, a third-year student of International Islamic University Chattogram, has taught more than 500 women how to ride scooters and take control of their own mobility and safety.

Girls can sign up for lessons on Nova's Facebook page "RoadBook BD", which was opened in 2019.

Birangana Shila Guha was raped by the Pakistan army during Bangladesh's nine-month-long War of Liberation in 1971.

After learning about the sexual assault once the war ended, both her father and husband refused to take her back, leaving her to fend for herself and her two daughters.

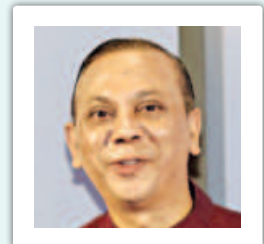
But she survived.

In 2018, Taheatul Jannat Remi established a free school named "Hasimukh Pathshala" for the underprivileged children in Faridpur. The school is providing education to 30 students, most of whom come from poor families.

Remi also gives training to women in Faridpur on self-defence and protecting themselves from sexual violence and creates awareness about child sexual abuse through her other organisation, Nandita Surakkha.

She said it was a

"The instances of courage that the awardees and many other unsung women have shown will serve as an inspiration for the rest."



Mominul Islam, chief executive officer and managing director of IPDC.

tremendous challenge to start an awareness programme on girls' reproductive health issues in a town like Faridpur.

However, she succeeded as her family supported her for the cause.

There are people like Remi who love to dedicate their lives to the welfare of people, said Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, while

introducing her.

The other awardees were introduced by: Hasin Jahan of WaterAid Bangladesh, Senjuti Saha of Child Health Research Foundation, Sinthia Sharmin Islam of Shajgoj, Maria Mumu of Moshal Mental Health, Tawhida Shiropa of Moner Bondhu and Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kori.

These women have moved forward by breaking glass ceiling as well as social and mental constraints and limitations, said Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

"Can you believe a female butcher is selling meat? It may seem to you a trifling achievement but she has actually commenced a revolution. Another woman overcomes her disability and runs an online shop. Today, when you will leave [the event venue], you will feel encouraged to break the glass-ceiling too," he added.

Theatre troupe Prachyanaut performed at the event, where the awardees were given cash support of Tk 2 lakh each.



Artistes performing at the award ceremony.

PHOTO: STAR

Monkeypox cases could be 'peak of iceberg': WHO

AFP, Geneva

The World Health Organization yesterday cautioned that some 200 monkeypox cases found in recent weeks outside of countries where the virus usually circulates could be just the beginning.

"We don't know if we are just seeing the peak of the iceberg," Sylvie Briand, WHO's epidemic and pandemic preparedness and prevention chief, acknowledged in a briefing to countries on the "unusual" spread of the virus.

Since Britain first reported a confirmed monkeypox case on May 7, nearly 200 cases have been reported to the UN health agency in countries far from the states where the virus is endemic.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has put the number of such cases at 219.

Endemic in a number of west and central African nations, monkeypox cases have suddenly been detected in more than 20 other countries around the world, including the United States, Australia, the United Arab Emirates and nearly a dozen EU countries.

The Spanish health ministry said yesterday that 98 cases had been confirmed there so far, while Britain currently counts 90 verified infections.

Portugal has meanwhile registered 74 confirmed cases, health authorities said yesterday, adding that all the occurrences are in men, mainly aged below 40.

"We are still at the very, very beginning of this event," Briand told member state representatives attending the World Health Assembly in Geneva.

"We know that we will have more cases in the coming days," she said, but stressed there was no need to "panic". "This is not a disease the general public should be worried about. It is not Covid or other diseases that spread fast."

Monkeypox is related to smallpox, which killed millions around the world every year before it was eradicated in 1980.

But monkeypox is much less severe, with a fatality ratio of three to six percent. Most people recover within three to four weeks.

The initial symptoms include a high fever, swollen lymph nodes and chickenpox-like rash.

While many of the cases have been linked to men having sex with men, experts stress there is no evidence it was a sexually transmitted disease. Rather, it seems to be transmitted by close contact with an infected person who has blisters on their skin.

There is not much in the way of treatment, but some antivirals developed against smallpox exist, including one that was recently approved by the European Medicines Agency against smallpox, Briand pointed out.