

Police cancel their iftar party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Police has cancelled its pre-scheduled iftar mehfil on March 29 at Police Staff College Convention Hall in the capital's Mirpur.

Police took the decision expressing solidarity with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's request for not holding iftar parties, reads a press release signed by Manjur Rahman, assistant inspector general (media) of Police Headquarters.

The prime minister has instructed her partymen not to organise iftar mehfls. Instead, she urged them to distribute iftar items among the poor," said Obaidul Quader, in front of the AL's Bangabandhu Avenue central office in the capital yesterday.

Lenin made AL's advisory council member

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former presidium member of the ruling Awami League Nooh-UI-Alam Lenin has been made a member of the party's advisory council.

Lenin was notified of the development on Friday night through a letter signed by the AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader.

"Sheikh Hasina, the president of the organisation, has nominated you as a member of the advisory council of Awami League according to Article 1 of the Constitution of Awami League (26)," read the letter.

Lenin confirmed The Daily Star that he received the letter.

Lenin was elected as the president of Bangladesh Chhatra Union in 1973. He was the general secretary of Bangladesh Krishak Samiti and presidium member of Undivided Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) until the 90's. After joining the Awami League in 1997, Lenin was made a member of the central committee.

He was later elected information and research affairs secretary, publicity and publications Secretary in the next council and presidium member in the 2016 council. Since 2010, he has been serving as the publisher and editor of Awami League's party mouthpiece 'Uttaran'.



Family members break down in tears while forming a human-chain demanding justice over the killing of two SSC candidates of Indrakul Secondary School in Bauphal upazila of Patuakhali. The photo was taken in front of Aswini Kumar Town Hall in Barishal yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

UN accuses Russia, Ukraine forces of ‘summary executions’ of prisoners

Kyiv ‘managing to stabilise’ battle in Bakhmut

AFP, Kyiv

The United Nations said Friday it was “deeply concerned” by what it said were summary executions of prisoners of war by both Russian and Ukrainian forces on the battlefield.

The head of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, Matilda Bogner, said that her organisation had recently recorded killings by both sides.

“We are deeply concerned about (the) summary execution of up to 25 Russian prisoners of war and persons hors de combat by the Ukrainian armed forces, which we have documented,” Bogner said at a press conference in Kyiv on Friday.

“This was often perpetrated immediately upon capture on the battlefield,” she said. “While we are aware of ongoing

investigations by Ukraine authorities into five cases involving 22 victims, we are not aware of any prosecution of the perpetrators,” she added.

Bogner also expressed “deep” concern over the alleged executions of 15 Ukrainian prisoners by Russian armed forces after their capture.

She said the Wagner mercenary group, which claims to be leading Russia’s assault for Bakhmut – the longest and bloodiest battle of the war -- was responsible for 11 of those killings.

In response to the UN report, Kyiv’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it was “unacceptable” to hold the “victim of aggression” responsible.

One UN report issued Friday claimed Ukrainian military personnel had subjected prisoners of war to death

threats, mock executions or threats of sexual violence. Some beatings were “purely retaliatory,” it said.

The Ukrainian parliament’s human rights commissioner Dmytro Lubinets said Friday that he was “surprised” by the allegations against Ukrainian troops and said he had not been informed of them in advance.

On Telegram, he wrote that he wanted to “know the facts and the indisputable arguments on which the conclusions” of the UN report were based.

In a separate statement on Friday, Kyiv’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs thanked the UN monitors for their work but emphasised that Ukraine “expects that the UN mission will avoid any steps that may be interpreted as equalising the victim and the aggressor”.

Recognise March 25 as Int’l Genocide Day

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She recalled how Bangabandhu built a country ravaged by the war.

“We got the recognition as the least developed country during his three years and seven months in power. It was unfortunate that the father of the nation was killed brutally.”

She said that the blood of the martyrs would never go in vain.

In the March 25 attack, dubbed “Operation Searchlight”, the Pakistani forces killed Bangalee members of the East Pakistan Rifles and police, students, teachers and ordinary people.

They set houses on fire and looted businesses, leaving a trail of destruction.

The day was observed as Genocide Day yesterday for the seventh time in the country since parliament unanimously adopted a resolution on March 11, 2017.

Meanwhile, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday issued separate messages on the eve of the Independence today.

The president in his message said people-oriented and sustainable development, good governance, social justice, transparency and accountability must be ensured in the country in order to achieve the desired goal of independence, reports BSS.

“It is our sacred duty to ensure a safe, happy, beautiful and prosperous Bangladesh for the new generation,” he said.

The PM in a recorded radio and televised message urged all to work for building a golden Bangladesh free from hunger and poverty.

She extended her sincere greetings to all Bangladeshis at home and abroad.

Budget likely

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the proposed budget will also start early, the official added.

The finance minister has already held three separate pre-budget discussions with economists, businesspersons, and editors of print and electronic media outlets.

The finance minister is unlikely to hold any further pre-budget sessions this year aside from a joint consultative pre-budget meeting with FBCCI and NBR.

Officials have said that their budget preparation will end by May.

A journey from literature to politics

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led by the students under the banner of Sarbadaliya Chhatra Sangram Parishad.

In 1969, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proposed the name Bangladesh for the independent country he had been dreaming of, and during the 1970 polls, Chhatra League pledged the creation of an independent country called Bangladesh.

However, modern political movements aside, undivided Bengal was referred to as “Bangladesh” in literature that goes as far back as the 19th century.

Following the Partition of Bengal, Rabindranath Tagore wrote a number of patriotic “swadeshi” songs in protest.

One of these songs was called “Bangladesh”.

“Aji Bangladesher hridoy hote kokhon aponi, tumi ei oporup rupe bahir hole jononi.”

Translated, it stands: “When did you come out of the heart of Bangladesh, o, Mother dear, with such inexplicable splendour!”

Another song penned during this time was “Amar Sonar Bangla, ami tomay bhalobashi (my golden Bangla, I love you)”, which later became the national anthem of Bangladesh.

But this too was not the first time that he called this landmass “Bangladesh”, with many of his writings mentioning this word.

Speaking to the Daily Star, Dr Soumitra Sekhar Dey, vice-chancellor of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, said, “The way Bangladesh is written, in its modern spelling, first came from the writings of Rabindranath.”

Earlier, the writings of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Peary Chand Mitra and Rangalal Bandopadhyay wrote about this land as “Bangodesh”, he said, referring to Bankim Chandra’s book, titled “Bangodesher Krishok” (Farmers of Bangodesh), as an example. Soumitra, also professor of the Bangla department at Dhaka University, added, “Rabindranath Tagore portrayed this land as being a fertile, green country, fed by a crisscrossing network of rivers and canals (shujola, shufola, shashya, shyamala).

In a letter by famous poet Jibanananda Das to Tagore in 1929, the word Bangladesh was mentioned (Patralap: Jibanananda Das, Provat Kumar Das).

In it, he wrote, “It is the utmost good fortune of the writers of Bangladesh that the brightest sun shining above their heads is the modern world’s greatest prodigy.”

Then in 1932, Kazi Nazrul Islam, later made the national poet of Bangladesh, composed 71 patriotic songs in a book named “Bonogiti”, where he too mentioned the word “Bangladesh”.

“Nomo nomo nomo, Bangladesh momo, chiro monorom, chiro modhur.”

Translated, the song pays homage to Bangladesh as the sweetest, the most beautiful.

Poet Sukanta Bhattacharya wrote revolutionary poems, which were published in 1950, three years after his death. One of the poems, written in 1937, mentioned the dream of a great land called Bangladesh.



“Himaloy thekey Sundarban, hothat Bangladesh; kepe kepe uthey Padmar uchhashey.”

Translated, it says – “Between the Himalayas and the Sundarbans, lies Bangladesh; shaking and trembling in the exhilaration of the Padma”.

The word “Bangladesh” came into political use when the dream of a sovereign state arose in the early 60s.

During the students’ movement against the Sharif Education Policy, declared by the then Pakistan government in 1962, a new organisation named Apurba Sangsad (Asthayi Purba Banga Sarkar - Temporary Government of East Bengal) was born.

This organisation unveiled the formation of a government it envisioned with renowned poet Begum Sufia Kamal as president and Chhatra League leader Abdul Aziz Bagmar as prime minister.

It also released three Istehars (manifestoes) demanding the freedom of the then East Pakistan.

In the first Istehar, released on December 21, 1963, the organisation demanded freedom from Pakistani discriminations. The second one, released on January 1, 1964, described the long history of the exploitation of the Bangalees.

The last Istehar was released on October 1, 1965, in which the organisation wrote about the ways to bring about an “independent Bangladesh”.

It proposed that East Pakistan be renamed “Bangladesh”.

Dr Ahmed Sharif, a Dhaka University teacher at that time, had written the Istehars for Apurba Sangsad (Protinayak Serajul Alam Khan: Mohiuddin Ahmad).

Then came the slogans with the word “Bangladesh” in full use.

Those that roared through the nation at that time – “Bir Bangalee Ostro Dhoro, Bangladesh Swadhin Koro (Valiant Bangalees, take up arms



and free Bangladesh)”, “Swadhin Koro, Swadhin Koro, Bangladesh Swadhin Koro (Liberate, liberate, liberate Bangladesh)”, “Tomar Desh, Amar Desh Bangladesh, Bangladesh (your country, my country, Bangladesh, Bangladesh)”.

On December 5, 1969, in a memorial meeting marking the fifth death anniversary of Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said East Bengal from then on would be called “Bangladesh”.

“Once, attempts were made to erase the name ‘Bangla’ forever from the pages of the map and the heart of this land. Except for the Bay of Bengal, the word could not be found in any usage of anything that had to do with the country... On behalf of the people of Bangladesh, I now declare that the eastern province of the country will no longer be called ‘East Pakistan’; from henceforth it will be known as ‘Bangladesh’.” (Karagarer Rojnamcha: Sheikh Mujibur Rahman).

Before the 1970 general election, a leaflet titled “Election - Bangladesh and Chhatra Samaj” was distributed on behalf of Chhatra League’s Central Committee, endorsed by its then president Nur-e Alam Siddiqui and general secretary Shahjahan Siraj.

It read that seven crore people were dedicated to freeing themselves from the oppression of West Pakistan and establish “Bangladesh”.

On March 3, 1971, Bangabandhu addressed a joint rally of Chhatra League and Sramik League at Paltan Maidan, which was presided over by Nur-e Alam Siddiqui.

There, Shahjahan Siraj read out another Istehar in the presence of Bangabandhu.

In it, Siraj called for the independence of “Bangladesh”. He also announced Bangabandhu as the commander-in-chief of the independent and sovereign nation, and “Amar Sonar Bangla” as the national anthem.

During his historical address on March 7 at the Race Course ground (now Suhrawardy Udyan), Sheikh Mujib uttered the word “Bangladesh” twice.

Then on March 25, 1971, when Pakistani occupation forces launched the brutal “Operation Searchlight”, he issued the declaration of the independence of Bangladesh at 12:20am (March 26).

The three-line declaration contained the word “Bangladesh” thrice.

“This may be my last message: From today Bangladesh is free! I call upon the people of Bangladesh, wherever you might be and with whatever you have, to resist the occupation army till the end. Your fight must go on until the last soldier of the Pakistan occupation army is expelled from the soil of Bangladesh and final victory is achieved.”

The call to arms was transmitted throughout Bangladesh through radio, telephones and telegrams.

Around 1:30am, Bangabandhu was arrested from his Dhanmondi house.

On April 10, 1971, the Mujibnagar government was formed at the Baidyanathatala in Meherpur, a former subdivision of Kushtia.

The government took oath a week later, and the constituent assembly proclaimed that the provincial government had the obligation to “declare and constitute Bangladesh to be a sovereign Peoples’ Republic and thereby confirm the declaration of independence already made by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman”.

On December 16, 1971, Bangladesh achieved victory after a nine-month war, which claimed the lives of around three million people.

On November 4, 1972, when the first constitution was adopted, the liberated country was officially christened “People’s Republic of Bangladesh”.

And so, the word Bangladesh became our name, our identity.

Schoolboy killed in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A schoolboy was killed in a road accident in Jhenidah’s Kaliganj upazila around 10:00am yesterday.

The dead is Tariqul Islam, 14, said police. Tariqul was riding his uncle’s motorcycle on the pillion. At one point, an earth-laden truck hit the motorcycle in Barobazar area, said Mohidul Islam, sub-inspector of Subarnashara police camp.

Tariqul died on the spot while his uncle Mahbubur Rahman, a schoolteacher, suffered injuries, said the police official.

Three hurt as stones hurled at trains

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Three people, including a locomotive driver, were hurt as unidentified people hurled stones at trains on Joydevpur-Bangabandhu Bridge rail route in Tangail’s Mirzapur upazila on Friday.

After the incident, Ferdous Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Kamalapur Railway Police Station, and Fazlur Rahman, assistant sub-inspector of Gharinda Railway Police Outpost, visited the spot with a police team yesterday.

Two passengers of Chitra Express and the locomotive driver of Maitre Express were hurt on the same day, said Kamrul Islam, station master of Mirzapur Railway Station.

A general diary was lodged with Kamalapur Railway Police Station in connection with the incidents, said Ferdous.

Man held with 35,000 yaba pills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested a man with 35,000 yaba pills in Chattogram’s Lohagara upazila yesterday morning.

The arrestee is Mohammad Jalal, 34, of Cox’s Bazar, said police.

On information, a police team intercepted Jalal’s car on Chattogram-Cox’s Bazar road. The pills were recovered from a hidden compartment behind the fuel tank of the car, said Atiqur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Lohagara Police Station.

“We filed a case in this connection and the arrestee will be taken to remand for quizzing,” he added.

BNP might not

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She also criticised the report for mentioning that the government’s facilities for the specially abled people and ethnic minorities were inadequate. The PM said the AL government did a lot for the ethnic minorities and the specially abled people, and that they were enjoying various government benefits.

Hasina said the human rights situation in the USA is questionable.

About price hike of essentials, the PM said prices were increasing across the world and Bangladesh was enduring its effects. She said her government would do everything to bring the prices within the reach of the ordinary people.

Hasina said her government would give priority to the food and agriculture sectors for the sake of the people.

Referring to shutting of banks in the USA, the premier said banks in countries like Bangladesh are struggling to keep their heads about water due to the global turmoil in the banking sector.

The meeting nominated Chattogram city AL Organising Secretary Noman Al Mahmud as the party candidate for the April 27 by-polls to Chattogram-8.

The parliamentary seat fell vacant following the death of AL MP Moslem Uddin Ahmed.

Putin ally proposes banning ICC in Russia

REUTERS

Russia’s parliament speaker yesterday proposed banning the activities of the International Criminal Court (ICC) after the court issued an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin, accusing him of the war crimes.

Vyacheslav Volodin, an ally of Putin’s, said that Russian legislation should be amended to prohibit any activity of the ICC in Russia and to punish any who gave “assistance and support” to the ICC.

“It is necessary to work out amendments to legislation prohibiting any activity of the ICC on the territory of our country,” Volodin said in a Telegram post.

Volodin said that the United States had legislated to prevent its citizens ever being tried by the Hague court and that Russia should continue that work.