

Shahidullah
Chowdhury
no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Veteran
politician
and a
prominent
leader of
the labour
movement,
Shahidullah Chowdhury,
passed away yesterday.

Shahidullah, former president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and a freedom fighter, breathed his last at 2:00pm at his Dhaka residence, said CPB central committee member Luna Noor.

His body would be kept at the CPB party office from 9:00am to 10:00am today, and then it would be taken to Central Shaheed Minar for people to pay tributes.

Afterwards, the body will be taken to his home in Demra, where he will be laid to rest after a namaz-e-janaza.

He had been unwell for several years.

Since 2020, he has been leading the movement of jute mill workers.

He had also served as the chairman of the Jute, Yarn, and Textile Workers' Struggle Committee for a long period and was the president of Bangladesh Trade Union Center for many years.

MINTU DESHWARA

The embankment of the Khawai River in the Jalalabad area of Sadar Upazila in Habiganj collapsed in June of last year, destroying crops, fish enclosures, and homes across a vast area. In August, flooding worsened the situation, causing erosion to expand by approximately 200 feet, transforming the site into a massive ditch.

Over a hundred villages from the Lokra, Richi, and Karab unions of Lakhai and Sadar upazilas depend on this embankment road, which is also used by residents from the neighbouring Kishoreganj district.

It is the only route for many villages, including Kashipur, Champur, Gopalpur, Mathuranagar, Joynagar, Islampur, and Jadavpur in Sadar upazila. Commuters now rely on battery powered auto-rickshaws to reach the eroded area and then cross by boat, disrupting the transportation of essential goods.

Despite seven months passing since the damage occurred, no repairs have been made.

Hundreds of acres of farmland in the haor region are at risk, particularly during the current Boro cultivation season. Local farmers said without prompt repairs to the embankment, their crops could be submerged when water flows into the river.

Low-lying areas, including villages near the district town, also face an increased risk of flooding, said villagers.

Residents have repeatedly contacted the Water Development Board (WDB) regarding the damage, but no solutions have been



implemented despite several meetings with local villagers.

Asfaq Mia, a resident of the Jalalabad area, expressed frustration over the difficulties in traveling to the city, which was previously easy by bicycle or auto-rickshaw. He urged the government to expedite the restoration of the dam.

Miftul Husain, a local farmer, questioned whether they would be able to cultivate Boro crops this year, citing a lack of confidence to invest in cultivation due to the risk of crop destruction if the dam remains unrepairs.

Jadid Mia, another farmer, emphasised the

dependence of their livelihoods on haor land and the devastating impact of losing crops.

Kaiser Rahman, chairman of the Lukra Union Parishad, echoed the same.

Contacted, Samiul Azam, deputy assistant engineer of the Water Development Board in Sadar upazila, said, "The design data for the repairs was sent to the circle office last September, with an estimated cost of approximately half Tk 50 lakh."

He said they are awaiting necessary funding, and repair work will commence as soon as the allocation is approved, expressing hope that work will start soon.

Casualties rise amid human

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According to Mohammad Abdul Aziz, a professor in the zoology department at Jahangirnagar University and a member of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of South Asia, this lack of planning has intensified the conflict between conservation efforts and local livelihoods.

SEPARATE ZONES

To address the escalating conflict between humans and elephants, the environment ministry has established a specialised subcommittee aimed at mitigating the issues arising in the affected areas.

This committee is tasked with implementing various

measures, including organising a training programme for the KEPZ team to manage elephant interactions.

Key initiatives involve mapping elephant migration routes, providing training for the Elephant Response Team, and creating water bodies such as lakes or ponds to support the elephants' needs.

Contacted, Abu Naser Md Yasin Newaz, a member of this subcommittee, said, "We have trained the ERT and KEPZ staff on how to manage elephant encounters effectively."

However, conservationists argue that merely training personnel and using

technology is not sufficient to resolve the issue.

Mohammad Abdul Aziz, a member of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of South Asia, said solutions like GPS tracking collars and solar fences are not sustainable long term fixes.

He advocated for the establishment of dedicated zones for elephants, saying, "Creating a separate zone for elephants is a permanent solution. The government can facilitate this, as there are still many hilly areas available for this purpose."

Such a strategy would also help restore balance between wildlife conservation and local livelihoods, he added.

Do not only prioritise admin

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titled "Building a People-Centric Civil Service: Bangladesh Perspective," held at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh (KIB) auditorium in the capital.

The Inter-Cadre Disparity Resolution Council organised the event, which was chaired by agriculturist Arif Hossain. Representatives from 25 cadres spoke at the event.

Currently, there are 26 government cadres in Bangladesh.

Officials from 25 cadres have long alleged that admin cadre officers enjoy more privileges, including key policymaking roles, promotions without available positions, foreign trips, and special powers.

During the event, Shahe Arefin, an officer from the Roads and Highways cadre, said, "We see continuous efforts to promote officials from one cadre, while even court orders that favoured our cadre have been

ignored."

He cited a 2015 High Court ruling that upgraded two positions in the Roads and Highways Department, which the ministry refused to implement despite losing appeals and reviews in the Supreme Court.

"We're forced to work amid such glaring discrimination. Without equal promotion opportunities, a people centric administration is impossible," he added.

Mesbah Uddin, an officer from the Cooperative Cadre, expressed regret over not receiving any overseas training in his 27-year career.

"Administration cadre officers exploit such opportunities despite spending less than two years in a ministry. How does that benefit public service?" he questioned.

Sirajul Islam, president of the BCS General Education Association, warned against disbanding the education and health

cadres, saying they attract the brightest minds.

The council announced a three point programme, including discussions at colleges and universities over the next month to gather public opinion on civil service reforms.

Government

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The Constitutional Reform Commission was formed on October 6, while the other five commissions were

established on October 3, with a 90-day deadline to submit their reports.

As such, the term of all the commissions, except the Constitutional Reform Commission, was scheduled to end Thursday (January 2).

The tenure of the Constitutional Reform Commission was originally set to end on January 4. The extensions aim to provide the necessary time for the commissions to complete their tasks and submit their final reports.

Sirajul Islam, president of the BCS General Education Association, warned against disbanding the education and health

NEWS

ULAB students call-off protests
VC to refrain from duty until probe is completed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agitating students of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh called off their two-day protest on Thursday night after receiving assurances from the administration that a probe committee would be formed within three working days.

As per the agreement, ULAB Vice-Chancellor Imran Rahman will refrain from performing his duties until the committee submits its report. All academic and administrative activities will resume on January 3.

The students had been demanding the resignation of the VC and members of the Board of Trustees, accusing them of disrespecting the spirit of the July uprising and engaging in alleged harassment, corruption, and "fascist collaborations."

The protest was triggered on Sunday when the administration threatened disciplinary action against two students for drawing graffiti in support of the July uprising. In response, students began demonstrations on Wednesday, culminating in a hunger strike by students Shibli Sadiq and Ibtesham Chowdhury on Thursday afternoon.

Following mediation by Abdul Hannan Masud, chief organiser of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, and discussions involving ULAB Registrar Faizul Islam, six decisions were reached at a meeting with protesters.

Key agreements include no punitive action against protesting students, a commitment by the university community to refrain from supporting individuals linked to the "fascist regime of Hasina's government," a public apology and removal of objectionable graffiti by protesters, and an expression of regret by the administration for earlier disciplinary actions, formalised through an MoU signed by the registrar.

Around 10:30pm, Sadiq and Chowdhury broke their hunger strike. Sadiq confirmed the withdrawal of protests in a press release.

Shivering in the cold

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have plummeted, with Panchagarh's Tentulia recording the country's lowest temperature yesterday at 8.3 degrees Celsius.

Md Saifuddin, 50, a rickshaw-van puller of Panchagarh municipality said though the sun

has appeared from the morning, it is tough to stay outside due to the cooler wind.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department has classified this as a mild cold wave, with temperatures between 8 and 10 degrees Celsius. The situation is expected to persist, with the possibility of two to three more cold waves in January.

"The cold is unbearable, and without sunlight, it's almost impossible to work in the fields," said farmer Kabir Mollah. Farmers have expressed concern about potential damage to their Boro paddy due to the prolonged cold spell.

Meanwhile, hospitals in the region are overwhelmed by patients with cold-related illnesses, particularly children and the elderly.

Rakibul Alam, resident medical officer of Thakurgaon 250-bed Modern Hospital, said, "We've admitted at least 600 people in the past few days, including around 200 children. Many are suffering from pneumonia, bronchitis, and other respiratory issues."

He also said on an average, six hundred patients take treatment, staying at the hospital regularly during the season while the number in the outdoors is much higher.

In the districts of Rangpur, Rajshahi, Pabna, Bogura, Naogaon, and Kushtia, temperatures

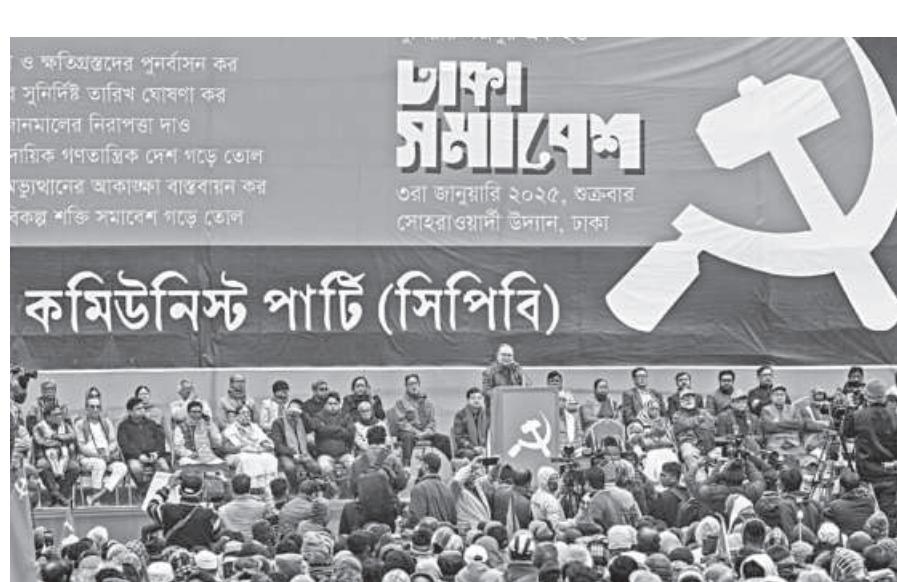
Chaity breaking

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key. Not everyone needs to run a beauty parlour. Even starting a business with street food, if done with passion, can lead to success," she added.

"Business is tough, but it's even tougher for hijras. Yet, it's not impossible. We must take the first step. There are so many examples within the hijra community. They can follow those examples," she said.

Chaity believes that in 20 years, they will be fully integrated into mainstream society. "It will take time, but we have to do our part," she said.



Former CPB President Mujahidul Islam Selim speaks at a rally of the Communist Party of Bangladesh at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital yesterday. Speakers at the event demanded that the interim government announce a specific timeframe for the election by January 15 and clarify what it wants to do in the name of reforms.

Parties talk about democracy

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beautiful, loving, democratic, and prosperous Bangladesh, the one envisioned by the proclaimer of democracy, Ziaur Rahman," he said.

Fakhrul said new possibilities have now arisen to build the country

and move forward with united efforts. "But I don't know why we can't rise above narrow-mindedness. I appeal to all concerned: let us stand up. Let's determine a path that is clear, true, and beautiful – rising above narrow-mindedness to materialise our dreams."

Professor Jahangir Alam, and Proctor Saifuddin Islam attended the meeting on behalf of the administration.

University Teachers' Network representatives included Professor Geeti Ara Nasreen, Professor Kamrul Hasan Mamun, Professor Maruful Islam, Dr Rushad Faridi, and others.

Students on December 31.

It urged university authorities to consult all student organisations to prevent such occurrences and called for more responsible security measures from the proctor's office.

DU pro-VC (administration) Professor Sayema Haque, Treasurer

of the Registrar, Joint Stock Companies and Firms, TCB, Bhaban (6th Floor), 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215,Respondents

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under section 13 of the Companies Act, 1994 has been filed for alteration of the object clauses in the Memorandum of Association of the Company by inserting the following clause at the end of the Memorandum of Association of the Company before the Hon'ble High Court. Upon preliminary hearing, Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel, the Hon'ble Justice of the High Court Division was pleased to admit the application by an order dated 18.12.2024 and further the petitioner is directed to publish this notice in two daily newspaper namely "The Daily Star" and "The Daily Jugantor" within 3 (three) weeks from date of said order and also the petitioner is further directed to file an affidavit-in-compliance on or before 20.01.2025. The petitioner is further directed to put in requisites forthwith.

Any person or persons having interest in the said application may appear either personally or through duly authorized Advocate on the date so fixed.

Copy of the said application may be obtained from the office of the

Yours sincerely,
Iftekhar Ahmed
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Reg. No. 15, Level-07,
Kabulpur, Sector-04,
Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.

.....Petitioner

.....Petitioner