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Badruddin Umar laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent public intellectual, historian and political activist Badruddin Umar was laid to rest yesterday at Jurain graveyard beside the graves of his parents.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at the Dhaka University Central Mosque after Zohr prayers.

Umar, a leading progressive voice in the country, passed away on Sunday at Bangladesh Specialised Hospital in Shyamoli due to old-age complications. He was 94.

His body was taken to the Central Shaheed Minar at 10:00am yesterday and kept there until 12:45pm for people from all walks of life to pay their last tributes.

Leaders from political parties, cultural organisations, student and labour bodies, and others gathered to honour him.

Emeritus Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury said, "Badruddin Umar was

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Noted economist Anu Muhammad paying tribute to eminent intellectual, historian and political activist Badruddin Umar at the Central Shaheed Minar. Umar was laid to rest at Jurain graveyard yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

App launched to monitor Durga Puja security

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new app has been developed for reporting incidents that may threaten the security of mandaps during the upcoming Durga Puja, said Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday.

Speaking to journalists at the Secretariat after a preparatory meeting on the festival, he said any incident reported through the app will be verified, and arrangements will be made for immediate remedial action.

The adviser said Durga Puja may be held at 31,576 mandaps across the country. Alongside volunteers, police and ansar members will be deployed round the clock at each mandap.

"The BGB has been given the main responsibility for security in border areas. Besides, all law enforcement agencies, including police, Rab, ansar, and the armed forces, will be on constant alert for puja security. About three lakh ansar members will be deployed," he added.

The adviser also announced restrictions on fairs during the festival. "Ganja and alcohol sessions are very common at the fairs organised in the vicinity of the mandaps. These will not be allowed under any circumstances this time," he said.



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Bangladesh used as ketamine transit hub to Europe

Say DNC officials after arresting two with 6.49kg of banned substance

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

A transnational narcotics syndicate has been using Bangladesh as a transit point to smuggle ketamine from Delhi to Europe.

The Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) made a breakthrough after seizing 6.49kg of ketamine worth Tk 60 crore, hidden inside white towels, from the Tongi area on Saturday. The consignment was scheduled to be sent to Italy and Spain via a courier service.

The ketamine was soaked into white towels and then carefully folded and packed to appear ordinary, making them difficult to detect by standard scanning machines.

"These traffickers exploit gaps in detection technology and use everyday items like towels to disguise large quantities of

drugs," said a senior DNC official. The consignment raised suspicion when DNC officers noticed that seven towels in a courier package weighed over eight kilogrammes, far exceeding

DNC seizes Ketamine worth Tk 60cr hidden in towels

Route traced: Delhi-Dhaka-Europe

Consignments bound for Italy, Spain

Officials say traffickers exploit courier services

Ketamine banned in Bangladesh since 2014

the standard maximum of 400 grams per towel. Upon opening the package, officers discovered the concealed ketamine, the official added.

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Committee formed to expedite trials of July killings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has formed a seven-member committee to expedite proceedings in cases filed over killings during the July mass uprising. The committee is headed by the additional secretary of the Law and Justice Division.

However, cases currently under trial at the International Crimes Tribunal will remain outside the committee's jurisdiction.

The decision was announced in a press release issued by the Ministry of Law yesterday.

The committee's mandate includes preparing a comprehensive list of cases with updated information on their current status, identifying the reasons behind obstacles in certain cases, and making recommendations for their resolution. It will also regularly inform the victims' families and the public about its progress, and make recommendations to the government to ensure the security of victims and witnesses.

Other members of the committee include a representative from the Ministry of Home Affairs (not below the rank of joint secretary), a representative

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INFORMAL WORKERS

Ensure legal recognition, protection for them

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at an event yesterday urged the government to amend the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 to recognise domestic, home-based, transport, waste and other informal workers, who make up 85 percent of the country's workforce.

They also called on political parties to prioritise the rights and welfare of informal sector workers in the upcoming national elections.

The demands were made at a consultation titled "National Consultation: Study Findings on Dynamic Mapping of Informal Sector Workers in Bangladesh", organised by Karmojibi Nari at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Speaking as chief guest, Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed, executive director of the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), stressed the

need to build a comprehensive database of informal sector workers, ensure job security, provide skill development opportunities, and allow

He emphasised promoting organisation and unionisation and urged political parties to include informal workers' agendas in their election manifestos.

Hafiza Begum, a researcher at Adhuna Bangladesh Limited, presented the study "Mapping of Informal Sector Workers in Bangladesh: Challenges, Opportunities and Policy Implications" at the event.

The study found that informal work dominates the labour market, accounting for 85 percent of the workforce across nearly 450 occupations.

Workers face insecure jobs, long hours, low and unstable incomes, limited social protection and hazardous conditions, with women and children especially vulnerable.

Despite policy recognition and initiatives such as the National Social Security

workers to report grievances to the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments.

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PLIGHT OF INFORMAL WORKERS

- Insecure jobs with little or no contracts
- Over 70% earn less than Tk 20,000 per month
- Long working hours without proper benefits
- Limited or no social protection
- Weak access to healthcare
- Hazardous working conditions

SHAMIM MOLLA MURDER

Ten months on, court order yet to reach investigators

SAKIB AHMED and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Shamim Molla, a former student of Jahangirnagar University, was reportedly beaten to death on campus on September 18 last year by a group of students who accused him of involvement in the attack on anti-quota protesters on July 15.

Two days after the killing, JU authorities filed a murder case with Ashulia Police Station against eight students and some 20 to 25 unidentified individuals.

Aggrieved by the case filed by the authorities, Shamim's elder brother, Shahin Alam, filed another murder case with a Dhaka court on October 9.

He accused nine university students; Chief Security Officer Sudipta Shaheen; Deputy Registrar Gafurul Hasan Chowdhury; and Proctor AKM Rashidul Alam, also joint secretary of the BNP-aligned Nationalist Teachers' Forum at JU, in the murder case.

After recording Shahin's statements, the court directed the officer in charge of Ashulia Police Station to investigate his case along with the previous case file by the university.

The Daily Star recently found that more than 10 months after the court's order, the documents

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A man clammers over a police barricade placed in the middle of the road to prevent jaywalking and unsafe crossings. Many others around him also disregard the barrier and walk past it, despite a foot-over bridge being only a short distance away. Such reckless actions often lead to accidents. The photo was taken recently from underneath the Kawran Bazar Metro Rail Station yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Dialogue, respect key to peace

Say inter-faith leaders and academics

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Inter-faith leaders and academics have called for deeper understanding and respect among different religions to build a pluralistic society free from violence.

They said a society plagued by violence rooted in ethnic, religious or political divisions cannot prosper, while individuals are unable to flourish in their human creativity.

The observations came at an international seminar on inter-religious dialogue and harmony organised by the Episcopal Commission on Christian Unity and Inter-religious Dialogue at the capital's Krishibid Institution Bangladesh yesterday.

The event was held to mark the visit of a Vatican delegation led by Cardinal George Jacob Koovakad, prefect of the Dicastery of Inter-religious Dialogue. Foreign diplomats, teachers and students from different faiths were present.

"Interreligious dialogue is not about changing someone's religion. It is about listening, understanding, respecting, and building trust. It is about mutual enrichment," said Cardinal Koovakad.

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