

Death anniversary of Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid

STAR REPORT

Today is the 13th death anniversary of eminent educationalist, diplomat, and intellectual Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid.



On the occasion, wreaths will be placed at his grave at the capital's Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard at 10:30am. Besides, prayers will be offered and food will be distributed among the destitute, said a press release.

Born in 1924, Murshid was at the forefront of the Language Movement of 1952, the Mass Upsurge of 1969, the Six-Point Movement, and the Liberation War of 1971.

During the Liberation War, he was a member of the planning commission of the Mujibnagar government in exile.

In his illustrious diplomatic career, Murshid served as the Bangladesh high commissioner to Poland and Hungary. Murshid was the first chairman of Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB) and a former vice chancellor of Rajshahi University.



PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

A farmer struggles to harvest Aman paddy as stagnant water remains in his field. Even a month after the last heavy rainfall, farmers across Rajshahi are still struggling to fully harvest their Aman crops. The photo was taken near the Nawhata-Borgachi road in Paba upazila of Rajshahi yesterday.

Thalassaemia takes

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thalassaemia carriers in Bangladesh at 10.9-13.3 percent, or roughly 17-22 million people. After Thailand, Bangladesh has the second-highest carrier rate in the world.

Among the 156 mothers surveyed, 63 percent experienced some level of depression, compared to 32 percent of urban adults. Meanwhile, 62 percent experienced stress and 58 percent experienced anxiety, higher than the urban adult rates of 42.5 percent and 47 percent respectively.

The study also found that 90 percent of mothers were worried about their child's future and 42 percent said their long-term career goals were affected.

Mothers spending more than Tk 30,000 per month on treatment faced significantly higher stress, anxiety and depression, she added.

Fahrin said policymakers

must recognise the mental health needs of mothers caring for children with thalassaemia and ensure accessible support services, including counselling and financial assistance or subsidised treatment.

"Thalassaemia is spreading like a silent epidemic due to lack of awareness, but there is still no proper policy or action plan to prevent this 100 percent preventable disease," she said.

The study recommended integrating a comprehensive national prevention strategy into government policy.

At the session, BIDS senior research fellow Abdur Razzaque Sarker and research fellow Jinnat Ara presented findings on the burden of diabetes, hypertension, and old-age security.

The session was moderated by M Asaduzzaman, former research director of BIDS.

ACC launches probe

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belonging to Hamid stands on Plot 6 on Lake Drive Road in Dhaka's Nikunja area. After completing his tenure as president, he moved into the house with his family in April 2023.

According to the

allegations, the state suffered huge financial losses due to the construction of walk-in barriers on both sides of the house, decks and hanging bridges, and lamp posts along the canal adjacent to the property.

Corruption persists

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manifestos of political parties for the 13th national parliamentary election.

The programme titled "The promise of a well-governed, discrimination-free and corruption-free Bangladesh" was held at its office in the capital's Dhanmondi yesterday afternoon.

On Bangladesh's relations with neighbouring India, Itekhazuzzaman said it is not a direct part of TIB's mandate, so they do not make policy proposals in that area. However, he said India faced its most embarrassing diplomatic and political setback in recent history due to its support for the previous authoritarian regime.

"India has not yet admitted this. It is unrealistic to expect they will accept it openly. But it does not mean relations between Bangladesh and India cannot improve. Both countries have strong stakes in cooperation in business, investment, diplomacy, and socio-economic areas. Mutual dependence is real," he said.

He added that India could have taken a more principled position by distancing itself from authoritarianism. "If India shifted from that position, it would make cooperation easier for Bangladesh."

Before the session, TIB, the Bangladesh chapter of Berlin-based global anti-graft watchdog, presented 52 recommendations in 14 sectors.

The organisation suggested that all political parties should respect the

spirit of the July uprising and the people's desire for state reforms.

Parties should promise to implement a time-bound and accountable process for reform proposals included in the July National Charter 2025; constitutional reforms and recommendations of six reform commissions (Constitution, Election System, Anti-Corruption Commission, Public Administration, Police, and Judiciary); recommendations of other reform commissions (Local Government, Media, Women, Health, and Labour); those from reports, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights fact-finding report, the committee preparing Bangladesh's Economic White Paper, and other committees and task forces.

They should continue and enforce ordinances and measures taken based on the July charter, other reform commissions, and amend the ordinances that failed to meet people's expectations.

On justice for human rights violations and on recognition and support for those killed or injured in the July uprising, TIB proposed that the parties should work above political interests.

All killings, crimes, and human rights violations during the uprising and under the authoritarian government should be properly investigated and prosecuted.

TIB said no reform will be effective or sustainable without successfully preventing corruption.

Country failing to shield children

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"According to MICS 2025, 86 percent of children aged 1-14 experience violent discipline, and 47.2 percent of girls are married before 18," she said.

The child helpline 1098 received 425,651 calls from January to November this year. Of these, 3,54,435 calls, including 1,45,384 from girls, were related to abuse, exploitation or psychosocial support. Among them, 33,072 children were rescued from extreme violence, homelessness, child marriage or exploitation.

Shabnaaz said families are failing to ensure basic safety and community-based protection bodies rarely function. National, district and union-level committees formed under the Child Marriage Restraint Act and Children Act remain mostly inactive, she said. Police and administrative systems also fall short, with influential individuals often swaying outcomes.

Prof Tania Haque of Dhaka University's Women and Gender Studies department said women are treated as private property at home and public property outside. She called for accurate data, a national family policy and education reforms to teach ethics, emotional growth, human behaviour and gender equality.

Shamima Pervin, head of UNFPA Bangladesh's gender unit, said school sexual harassment committees are

mostly inactive due to poor training, unclear reporting systems and low awareness among parents, teachers and students.

She said comprehensive sexuality education covers less than 20 percent of essential topics.

Rekha Saha, legal aid secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said most complaints come from girls and women facing abuse within the family, including restrictions on education and mobility, forced marriage and domestic violence.

She stressed the need for counselling, medical support, legal aid and shelters, along with enforcement of High Court directives.

Kamrun Nahar of Naripokkho said despite multiple laws and action plans, implementation is weak and accountability is largely absent. She said society normalises violence and authorities often ignore court directives.

Natalie McCauly, chief of Child Protection at Unicef Bangladesh, said investing in child protection is both a moral and economic imperative, with each dollar invested yielding up to USD 15.

Besides, violence against women and children costs Bangladesh up to 5 percent of GDP, she said. She called for scaling up effective programmes, strengthening social services and pushing legal reforms to reduce impunity and prevent

child marriage and online exploitation.

Farhana Yeasmin, deputy commissioner of DMP's Women Support and Investigation Division, said more female officers are handling cases, but investigations are delayed by slow DNA, medical and forensic reports.

She warned that violence is increasingly shifting online, with intimate partners misusing images to blackmail victims. She stressed the need for advanced tools, coordination and specialised police training from recruitment.

Sharmin Akter, superintendent of police at Police Headquarters, said their division is active in handling cyber harassment cases through hotlines and trained officers, reaching over a million beneficiaries since 2021.

She said social awareness is as important as law enforcement.

Channel 24 Senior Reporter Jenia Kabir Shuchona highlighted the media's role, urging gender-sensitive reporting that focuses on the crime, not the victim.

Mostafa Mostakur Rahim Khan, director of programmes at the Department of Social Services, said District and Upazila Child Welfare Boards struggle with administrative loads, but Unicef supported projects are improving coordination.

Dr Abul Hasanat, joint

secretary and district judge at the Law and Justice Division, emphasised the need to strengthen the justice system through specialised tribunals for child sexual abuse cases and stronger law enforcement to reduce power imbalances.

Maheen Newaz Chowdhury, director of programmes at Plan International, stressed youth engagement, digital registration and community-based approaches for long-term prevention.

The discussion was moderated by Tanjim Ferdous, in charge of NGOs and Foreign Missions, at The Daily Star.

Couple found

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double murder took place late last night.

The OC said, "Primary investigation suggests that both were killed by blows to the head. The police and detective branch have jointly begun investigations to identify those involved."

"The bodies have been sent to Rangpur Medical College morgue for autopsy," he added.

According to locals, Jogesh was a schoolteacher and retired in 2017. The couple lived in their village home.

Following the incident, Taraganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Monabber Hossain, and upazila Freedom Fighters' Council unit commander Ali Hossain visited the site.

Energy crisis a failure

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Reflecting on the past decade, he said the atmosphere was marked by fear. "Shutting down outlets, ownership transfers, sacking journalists, and cutting advertisements were very common. Sometimes businesses influence the media more than the government. As a result, many major incidents went unreported."

He added, "Sometimes there was news, but there was no editor willing to dare to publish it."

Dhaka Tribune Editor Reaz Ahmed said achieving

100 percent electrification was a success, but it came at a huge cost, with corruption remaining largely unexposed.

"The time has not ended," he said, adding that journalists would continue to expose malpractice based on lessons learned, not out of vindictiveness.

The session was chaired by Monowar Mostafa, executive member of the Bangladesh Working Group on Ecology and Development. Shahidul Islam Chowdhury, executive editor of Daily Desh Rupantor, also spoke.

Coalition formed

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The release said the coalition has been formed to ensure that the voices, struggles and aspirations of women and children, who make up the majority of the population, are not sidelined in political commitments.

Women constitute 50.8 percent of Bangladesh's population (World Bank, 2023) and children 33 percent (Unicef, 2023), yet their needs remain weakly reflected in national agendas, the release added.

It said persistent vulnerabilities -- including gender-based violence, early marriage, learning poverty, malnutrition, unsafe migration and climate risks -- continue across the country.

Political leaders must recognise that the wellbeing of women and children is not a peripheral agenda, it is the foundation of a just, resilient and future-ready nation," the coalition said.

It urged all political parties to demonstrate leadership by committing to evidence-based, adequately financed and inclusive policies that reflect the lived realities of women and children.

489 new posts

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also responsible for creating, abolishing, and restructuring officer and staff positions.

Alongside the committee chair, Justice Md Ashfaul Islam, the committee includes Appellate Division's Justice AKM Asaduzzaman; High Court Division's Justices Md Atabullah and Md Bazlur Rahman;

senior secretary of the SC secretariat; senior secretaries of law and justice division, ministry of public administration, and finance division; and SC registrar general.

The approval of these new posts marks an important step towards strengthening the administrative capacity and efficiency of the SC secretariat, said an SC press release.

Democracy, growth

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parliament, rule of law and civic engagement.

"Second," he asked, "can that democratic system deliver real economic development?" Without meaningful progress, democracy risks losing legitimacy, he cautioned. He stressed the need for policies that promote inclusive growth and broaden opportunities for all, not just the privileged few.

"And third," he said, "what will be the quality of that development?" Development must reduce both economic and social disparities if it is to be truly meaningful. "GDP growth alone cannot be our benchmark," he said, urging a broader focus on justice, equity and shared prosperity.

"These are three separate, complex issues," he said. "Yet public discourse often remains limited to the first -- the structure of democratic governance -- while the deeper questions surrounding development go largely unaddressed."

Mahmud also drew attention to what he termed a "long-standing culture of informal and unethical dealings" between segments of the bureaucracy and private businesses, which he said continues to undermine development efforts.

Reducing bureaucratic delays and simplifying licensing alone, he argued, will not solve systemic problems when rooted collusion between public officials and private actors persists.

This "unholy alliance", he said, enables certain businesses to gain unfair advantages through backdoor dealings, distorting both markets and governance. "When such a culture takes hold -- especially in regulatory or financial institutions -- it becomes a system that excludes transparency and accountability."

He acknowledged that

some recent reforms, such as mandatory online income tax filing, have reduced petty corruption and harassment of ordinary taxpayers. But he cautioned that digital solutions are unlikely to stop large-scale tax evasion or elite influence without broader institutional and political reforms.

Mahmud pointed to Bangladesh's persistently low rankings on global indicators related to business climate and governance, saying these reflect not only regulatory gaps but a deeper culture that tolerates, and at times incentivises, rent-seeking behaviour. A particularly dangerous outcome, he warned, is the rise of crony capitalism, where a handful of politically connected firms dominate sectors like infrastructure and public procurement.

"The problem isn't just corruption in the traditional sense. Over time, vested interests become deeply embedded in institutions, influencing not only outcomes but policies themselves," he said.

Mahmud stressed the importance of rebuilding social capital -- mutual trust and responsibility -- which he said once held rural economies together in the absence of formal systems.

He concluded by urging policymakers to go beyond rhetoric and short-term fixes. "A functioning democracy isn't just about holding elections," he said.

"It's about the kind of institutions we build, the behaviour we encourage, and the values we pass on to future generations."

PRAYER TIMING		DECEMBER 8	
Fazr		Zohr	Asr
AZAN 5-15		12-45	3-45
JAMAAT 5-50		1-15	4-00
		5-22	7-30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION			