

BANGABANDHU BIRTH CENTENARY

PM to inaugurate celebration countdown on January 10

Bss, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate the countdown to Mujib Borsho -- celebrating the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman -- on January 10.

She will inaugurate the event at the old airport in Tejgaon -- where the airplane carrying Bangabandhu landed on his return to an independent Bangladesh the same day in 1972 from Pakistan.

The countdown will begin simultaneously in every district, upazila and all public gathering places across the country.

Talking to the news agency, Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, chief coordinator of the Birth Centenary Celebration National Implementation Committee, said as January 10 is a historic day for the nation, they are

going to start the countdown from that day.

On January 10, 1972, Bangabandhu returned to an independent Bangladesh via London and New Delhi, after 290 days of captivity in Pakistan jail.

"Our goal is not just to celebrate the birth centenary, but to highlight the country's development activities towards building a 'Sonar Bangla' as dreamt by Bangabandhu," he added.

The chief coordinator said different socio-cultural and political organisations from grassroots to national level, ministries and divisions are arranging programmes to celebrate the birth centenary.

He said there will be an inaugural programme on March 17 where eminent personalities from home and abroad will attend.

Earlier, Home Minister

Asaduzzaman Khan said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will unveil the birth centenary logo and the countdown clock.

The minister said around 2,000 guests and 10,000 spectators will be invited to the programme.

Spectators will have to register using a mobile app. The Dhaka International Trade Fair will be requested to remain closed on that day.

Countdown clocks will be set up at 28 spots in 12 city corporations, 53 districts, and in Tungipara and Mujibnagar, he added.

The minister made the comment after a meeting of the security sub-committee on January 1, formed at the recommendation of the National Implementation Committee to celebrate the birth centenary, at the Secretariat.

Alternative funding

FROM PAGE 3

Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP25, was held with an aim to finalise the "rulebook" of the Paris Agreement, which outlines the rules for carbon emissions trading and other forms of international cooperation.

During COP21 in Paris in 2015, nearly 200 nations signed the climate deal which aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change.

However, the countries failed to reach consensus in this regard, pushing decisions into next year's COP26 in Glasgow, UK.

"The existing divide and contention might deepen the crisis. So the government will have to take initiatives for negotiating alternative funding sources accordingly for COP26 in Glasgow," Aminul said.

Speakers placed some recommendations for alternative funding to continue and strengthen ongoing climate action initiatives.

"Disputed issues of COP are too complex to formulate an acceptable global outcome in time; even from future COP conferences," Atiq Rahman, executive director of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, said.

Ziaul Haque, representative of Campaign For Sustainable Rural Livelihood, said, "As Bangladesh will graduate to middle-income country status, it should focus on negotiating enough funds as a country that is highly vulnerable to climate change."

The event was moderated by Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, executive director of COAST Trust. Md Shamsuddoha, chief executive of Centre for Participatory Research and Development (CPRD), addressed the programme, among others.

Discharge duties with sincerity

Health minister urges doctors

Bss, Rajshahi

Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday asked doctors and others concerned to discharge their duties with utmost sincerity and honesty for the welfare of people.

"We want all to get their respective healthcare services properly and doctors are the key players to this end," he said while sharing views with physicians at Rajshahi Medical College (RMC) auditorium as chief guest.

Health Education and Family Welfare Secretary Ali Noor and Director of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) Brig Gen Jamilur Rahman also addressed the meeting. RMC Principal Prof Nawshad Ali chaired the event.

The minister said the present government has attained a remarkable success in healthcare services.

In response to some demands placed before the minister for further improvement of RMCH and RMC, he told the audience that all of those will be fulfilled.

All the existing units of CCU, ICU and dialysis in RMCH will be doubled and the hospital's capacity will be enhanced as well.

"We will take immediate steps to elevate the existing four-storey building to ten-storey and start a dental college," the health minister added.

The minister said the government will ensure all necessary facilities in phases. He also urged all concerned to perform their duties sincerely as the prime minister is dedicated to the improvement of the health sector.

He said implementation work of the Rajshahi Medical University (RMU) project is expected to start within this year.

Among others, lawmaker Prof Dr Monsur Rahman, BMA local unit president Prof AB Siddique and Divisional Director of Health Dr Copendra Nath Acharya were present at the meeting.

Earlier, the health minister visited the proposed site of RMU.



Md Shamim would pose as a police officer to hijack people's vehicles. He was arrested from Dhaka-Narayanganj link road yesterday after his attempt at a carjacking failed. He was accompanied by three others who fled. Two guns and two walkie-talkies were seized from him. Police are trying to arrest Shamim's associates.

PHOTO: STAR

Include transgender people in the mainstream

Speakers urge government



Discussants at the roundtable held at The Daily Star Centre.

PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged the government to include transgender people into the mainstream to ensure their rights, as this community lags far behind others.

They also called upon the authorities concerned to provide transgender persons with work opportunities so that they can earn a dignified livelihood instead of depending on others' generosity.

Right Here Right Now (RHRN) Bangladesh, a platform of non-government organisations including

Bandhu, arranged the discussion on the role of media in incorporating the transgender population in mainstream society. The event was held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Speaking at the event, Saraban Tahura Zaman, national coordinator of RHRN Bangladesh, said transgender people face discrimination in all aspects -- from health to education to livelihood.

"We want to change this situation and help them secure a dignified life," she said, adding that the government should put extra emphasis on transgender population.

Munni Saha, head of news of

TV channel ATN News, said there is confusion over the identity of transgender people -- whether they would be addressed as "Hijra" or "third gender".

"This issue needs to be resolved immediately. At the same time, we need to change our mindset and show these people the respect they are entitled to," she added.

Shabnam Azim, an assistant professor of journalism at Dhaka University; Shale Ahmed, executive director of Bandhu; and Shahnaz Sharmeen, chief reporter of Nagorik TV, spoke at the programme, among others.

Deadlock over incineration fee

FROM PAGE 5

College Hospital, Park View Medical College Hospital, Noorjahan Hospital and Al Haramain Hospital -- are yet to accept the proposal, said the PRISM official.

LONG INCINERATOR DOESN'T WORK

The city has only one incinerator at MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Its Deputy Director Dr Himangshu Lal Roy said, "Our incinerator has remained out of order for five years. The city corporation is collecting waste produced here. We have a pit where we burn some waste."

IMPACTS ON HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT

Meanwhile, tonnes of untreated clinical waste being dumped near the wetland "Bharera Beel" are causing health risks and environmental degradation, said experts. Such a situation exists due to indifference of the government and hospital authorities and subsequent absence of necessary apparatuses for decades, they said.

More than one lakh people live near the marshland. They depend on it for their livelihood. During dry season, they grew crops; and in the monsoon, they catch fish.

The garbage is being spread to nearby 200 acres of farmland, said locals demonstrating over the issue.

Ajmol Miah, a farmer living there, said, "During rainy season, my farmland is flooded with waste, causing difficulties in cultivating crops. Besides, quality of the yield is becoming poor as soil is losing fertility."

Misbah Uddin, caretaker of two

nearby fisheries, said, "When it rains, the waste and contaminated water enter the waterbodies, killing fish. Last monsoon, we lost fish fries worth Tk 2 lakh."

Monoronjon Talukder, a local, said, "More than 100 fishermen in nearby Gotatikor and Dhopapara areas switched their profession as they do not find fish in the beel."

"Besides, many were injured with sharp objects hidden inside the marshland," he said.

During a recent visit to the site, this correspondent found many ragpickers collecting items -- including syringe, saline bag and medicine ampoule -- without using safely gears.

Ten-year-old Mohammad Khoka and his mother Shikha Begum were among them.

Khoka, a third-grader of a local school, said he collects the items because he can earn money by selling those.

But, neither the boy nor his mother know that these are full of germs and may cause serious health risk.

Dr Debapada Roy, director of Directorate General of Health Services in Sylhet, said, "Such medical waste can cause serious respiratory, skin and other problems to them."

Civil Surgeon Dr Premananda Mandal echoed the same.

Shikha Begum, another ragpicker, said around 50-60 people -- including 10-12 children -- collect items every day and earn Tk 300-500 each daily by selling those.

When asked about health risk, Shikha said she is not aware of it.

Based on the collection, a business group to purchase those items has been

formed near the dumping ground.

Prof Jahir Bin Alam of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology said, "The dumped medical waste has been damaging soil and contaminating water and air for years in the surrounding areas."

"In a test around two years ago, we found mercury, cadmium, zinc and copper in groundwater collected from tube-wells within 5km in the area," he said, adding that canal water was also in similar situation.

The contamination might spread to the nearby Surma river, said Prof Jahir.

The people living in the area are at high risk of being affected with many diseases like cancer. Children are most vulnerable, he said.

PROTESTS CONTINUE

Locals and environmentalists have been protesting the unplanned waste dumping for a long time.

Ana Miah, convener of Krishak and Paribesh Raksha Committee of Dakshin Surma, said, "We have formed a human chain and submitted a memorandum to all authorities concerned to save Bharera Beel and the farmland."

Expressing concern over such dumping, Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon's Sylhet chapter, said, "It is posing a serious environmental threat. It is deeply concerning that they [the authorities] are treating medical waste as general waste."

"We demand immediate change of this situation."

Police Week starts today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six-day "Police Week-2020" begins today in Dhaka. This year's theme is "Mujib barsher angikar police hobe janatar".

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is set to formally launch the Police Week at 10:30am at Rajarbagh Police Lines grounds, says a press release of Bangladesh Police Headquarters.

The PM is scheduled to inspect a parade on the occasion.

She will give away awards to 118 police personnel for their outstanding performance, including heroic activities in combating crimes and militancy, solving important cases with efficiency and honesty in the last one year.

Fourteen of them will be awarded with Bangladesh Police Medal (BPM-gallantry), 20 with President Police Medal (PPM-gallantry), 28 with Bangladesh Police Medal (BPM-Service) and 56 with President Police Medal (PPM-Service), according to the release.

The prime minister, after the march-past, will also visit stalls set by the Bangladesh Police Nari Kalyan Samity.

Samson H Chowdhury's

FROM PAGE 5

he also obtained a diploma in management from a Harvard University school.

Samson Chowdhury, son of a medical officer in an outdoor dispensary, started a small pharmacy at Ataikula in Pabna in 1952.

It was beginning of the country's one of the leading pharmaceutical companies that eventually became the Square Group.

He was awarded the "Best Entrepreneur of the Country" for the year 2000-2001 by The Daily Star and DHL.

He was founder president of Bangladesh

Association of Publicly Listed Companies and vice-president of International Chamber of Commerce, Bangladesh.

He was also the chairman of Central Depository Bangladesh Ltd. He opened an orphanage in 1985 for poor Christian children at his ancestral residence in Ataikula in 1985.

Like previous years, various programmes have been chalked out to commemorate Samson H Chowdhury at his village home. Prayers will be offered at the ASTRAS firm house in Pabna while a memorial meeting will be held at Pabna Press Club.

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Abdus Salam's treasure

FROM PAGE 3

In the meantime, he came into contact with a man who was running a scrap business. Salam saw opportunity in this. He soon left his job and started his own business.

It proved to be his calling. From the get go, he became immersed in running his shop. So much so that he did not quite feel the need to get married. "I got married only nine years ago," Salam said.

But it was more than just passion that compelled him. He had to support his younger brother and sister find their footing in life. "I helped my brother open a tea stall at my village (in Rangpur) and funded my sister's marriage," he said.

Once everything was settled -- siblings and shop -- Salam finally had the time to get married to Shahana, some 35 years younger to him.

"I'm happy with him. He is a good person. I like taking care of this small store," Shahana said. She has become something of a co-owner over time.

It's not an easy job. "After sorting out breakfast and lunch, I come here by 9am and go home at 8pm to make dinner," she said. But it's not an issue for her. "I consider him and the business an important part of my life."

Asked if she wants to learn how to repair electronic gadgets, she shook her head in the negative, but not without a smile.

Do you have a Dhaka Vibe story to share? Email us your ideas or reports to dhakavibeds@gmail.com.