



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

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PLUS 8 PAGES THE DAILY STAR PLUS ON BANGABANDHU'S BIRTH CENTENARY

20 PAGES PLUS LIFESTYLE & 8 PAGES TABLOID ON NATIONAL CHILDREN DAY & MUJIB BIRTH CENTENARY PRICE: Tk 12.00

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Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib and their youngest son Sheikh Russel with Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during her visit to Bangladesh on March 17, 1972.

BANGABANDHU'S BIRTH CENTENARY TODAY

His legacy is our beacon of hope

WASIM BIN HABIB

"The killers' bullets took away the Father of the Nation. They tried to erase his name from the history of Bangladesh. But they could not. The killers could not realise that Bangabandhu's blood flowed down the stairs of the Dhanmondi-32 house and spread all over Bangladesh and gave birth to crores of Mujibs. And that is why, today, the people of Bangladesh are wide awake in search of truth."

This is how Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of the undisputed leader of the Bangalees, tried to introduce Bangabandhu to the children in a letter she penned on the eve of his birth centenary and National Children's Day today.

It is, however, very hard to describe in a few words the man who was larger than life in every sense of the phrase.

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Bangabandhu's first birthday in free Bangladesh

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

MARCH 17, 1972

The birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is observed today in the country in simple fashion. The birthday of the father of the nation coincides with the arrival of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in Bangladesh. Indira Gandhi presents fruits and sweets to Bangabandhu on his birthday.

The day begins with special prayers held at the city mosques, temples, pagodas and churches wishing Bangabandhu good health and a long, happy life. Awami League volunteer corps present a guard of honour to the prime minister at his residence in the early morning.

The city newspapers, in their Friday

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JOURNO TORTURE Kurigram DC, 3 other officials withdrawn

STAR REPORT

Kurigram Deputy Commissioner Sultana Pervin and three of her colleagues were withdrawn yesterday following their controversial role in the conviction of a journalist in the district.

The Ministry of Public Administration issued a gazette notification, saying the DC was withdrawn. Another notification said Mohammad Rezaul Karim, a deputy secretary at the ministry, has been appointed to the post.

The three others withdrawn were Senior Assistant Commissioner Nazim Uddin, and assistant commissioners Rintu Bikash Chakma and SM Rahatul Islam.

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Rise in dengue cases rings alarm

263 admitted to city hospitals in Jan-Mar 16 this year; the number was 73 during same period last year

HELEMI ALAM

The number of dengue patients admitted to hospitals this year is already around four times higher than that of last year during this time, although the rainy season is still two months away.

Recently collected data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) shows that as of March 16, 263 patients have already been admitted to hospitals across the country, whereas till March last year, this figure was only 73.

Experts raised the alarm saying the country witnessed the worst ever dengue situation last year and that the authorities should take preventive measures right away to avoid a repeat of such an outbreak.

According to its data, a total 1,01,354 dengue cases were reported last year, of which 49,544 were outside Dhaka. The number of deaths from dengue was 179, said Dr Aysha Akhtar, assistant director of the health emergency operation centre and control room of the DGHS.

Jahangirnagar University (JU) entomologist Kabirul Bashar, who, along with a team of researchers, has been conducting surveys on Aedes mosquitoes under a three-year research project, said the density of Aedes mosquito larvae is higher than that of last year around this time.

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Three more infected

Covid-19 cases now 8 in country; 95 return from Italy, Germany despite travel ban; DGHS officials say there could be some undetected cases

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN and RASHIDUL HASAN

Three more people have tested positive for coronavirus bringing the country's total to eight, according to Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research.

But the actual number of infected people could be much higher, Prof Abul Kalam Azad, DG of the Directorate General of Health Services, admitted while talking to The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, 95 Bangladeshis from Italy and other European countries

landed in Dhaka last night, despite the government's travel ban on all European countries except the UK. The supposed ban went into force at 12:00pm yesterday. Of the eight people tested positive so far, four were infected by family members who returned from Italy and Germany.

Yesterday's three new patients -- a woman and two children aged below 10 -- are family members of one of the two people who tested positive on Sunday.

On Saturday and Sunday, at least 349 other Bangladeshis who arrived

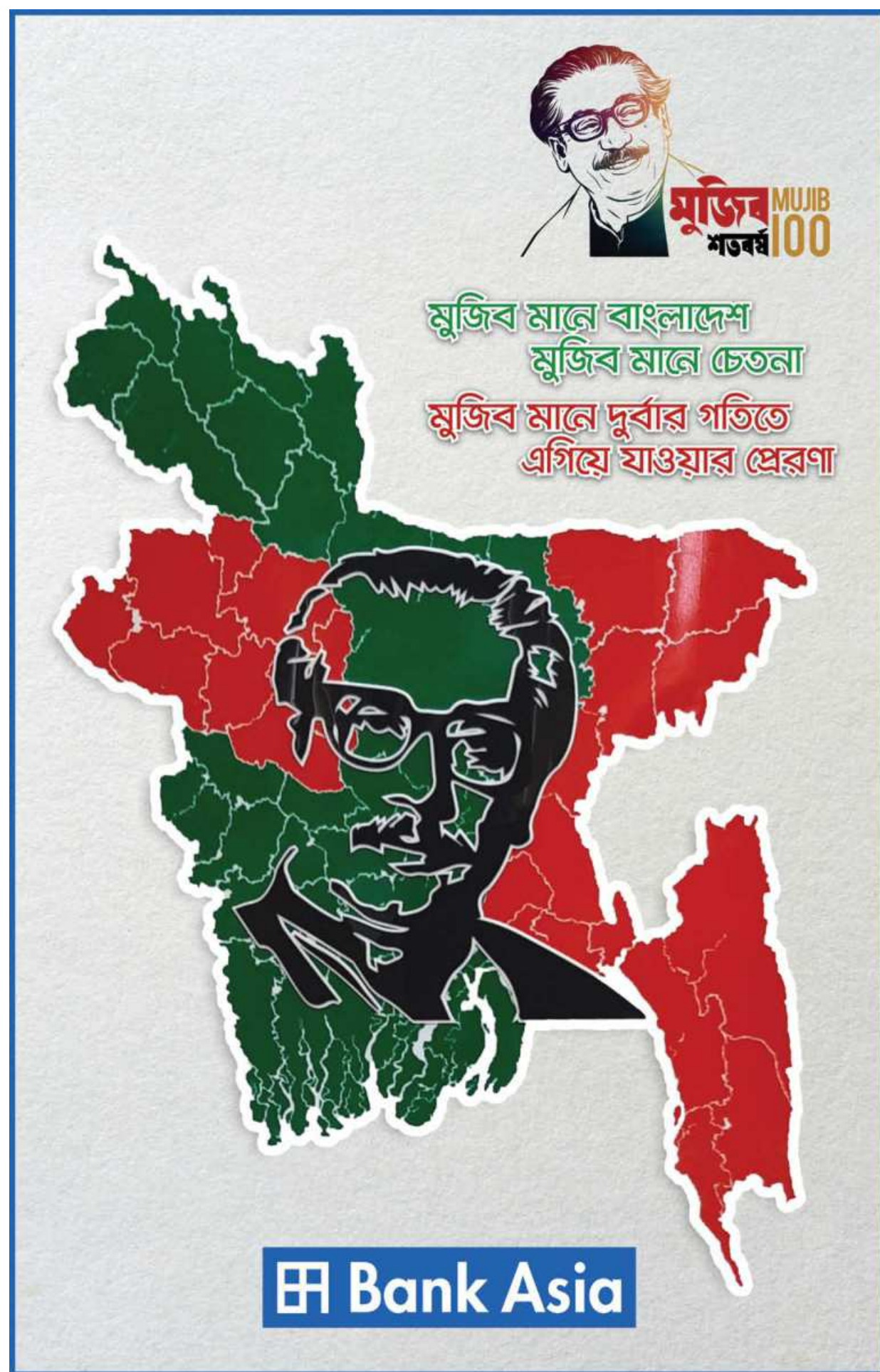
from Italy were allowed to go home and asked to be in self-isolation. However, it has been reported that many people "in quarantine" were roaming around in their neighbourhoods.

Italy is the worst affected country in Europe, which is the new epicentre of the coronavirus pandemic.

Asked how far the reported number was from the number actually infected, Prof Azad last night said, "There might be more patients."

He added that icddr, b and Institute of Public Health in the capital and

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বাবা মা'র খোকা
বন্ধুদের মুজিব
বাঙালী ডেকেছিল বঙ্গবন্ধু
তিনি বলেছিলেন,
এদেশের নাম হবে
বাংলাদেশ



সোনার বাংলা গড়ে তোলার প্রত্যয় নিয়ে
বঙ্গবন্ধুর জন্মশতবার্ষিকীতে
ঢাকা ব্যাংক এর পক্ষ থেকে

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PROVIDING CARE TO BANGLADESHIS ABROAD

Dhaka seeks support of foreign countries

Foreign minister briefs diplomats at state guesthouse Padma, urges all to stay united to fight coronavirus pandemic

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has sought support from other countries to provide safety and care to the Bangladeshis residing abroad while assuring that foreigners in Bangladesh would be taken care of during the global coronavirus outbreak. Briefing foreign diplomats at state guest house Padma yesterday evening, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen called on all countries to stand united and support each other in all possible ways in addressing this enormous public health challenge that can paralyze the whole world.

“Our missions in your countries are observing the situations closely. They are in constant touch with the local administrations and are fully cooperating with them.

“We request the governments of your countries, through you, [your] excellencies, to extend necessary support to the embassies and consulates of Bangladesh in your countries so that they can perform their duties in this challenging time,” Momen said.

There are more than one crore Bangladeshis working and residing abroad, mostly in the Middle East. Many Bangladeshi expatriates also live in Europe, especially Italy and the UK, and even in the USA and Canada.

He assured the foreign diplomats stationed in Bangladesh that the government will stand beside all foreigners living in this country and will support and care for them in case of any issue related to Covid-19.

“Let me also take this opportunity to reassure you that diplomats working here in Bangladesh are our honoured guests, and we will take all necessary steps to ensure your safety and

wellbeing in this difficult time,” the foreign minister said.

The coronavirus pandemic has now spread to 143 countries, killing some 6,000 people and infecting almost 154,000 people all over the world.

Europe has been declared the epicentre of Covid-19 now.

Authorities in Bangladesh detected eight positive cases of Covid-19, but nobody has died. Among various measures, Bangladesh has suspended flights from all of Europe, except for England, and closed all schools from today until March 31.

Momen briefed the diplomats of the measures taken by the health authorities in Bangladesh to prevent Covid-19 and take care of those infected.

Noting Bangladesh’s decision not to allow people coming from Europe into Bangladesh for the time being, he said the authorities have taken this measure on a purely temporary basis -- till 31st March 2020. He pointed out that this measure is not applicable to people with diplomatic passports or laissez-passeurs posted in Bangladesh. Also, people are allowed to leave Bangladesh for Europe.

Bangladesh believes in working together with all countries -- regionally and globally, he said, adding that Bangladesh is also engaged regionally under the SAARC Mechanism to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and to address the situation and issues arising out of it.

Minister Momen, state minister for foreign affairs Shahriar Alam and foreign secretary Masud Bin Momen, along with foreign diplomats, flew balloons on the occasion of the yearlong Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s birth centennial celebrations beginning today.

Europe to shut its borders

EU to curb all non-essential travel to contain spread of virus; Italy entering riskiest weeks, warns PM as the country records 1,809 deaths; Spain sees 1,000 new cases

AGENCIES

The European Union will close its borders to all non-essential travel “for an initial period of 30 days” as it attempts to contain the ongoing spread of the coronavirus on the continent.

The temporary restrictions could be prolonged beyond the 30 days, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced yesterday. She appeared confident that the European Council will sign off on the restriction in a vote today.

Family members of European nationals, essential staff such as doctors and nurses, and people transporting goods to the EU will be exempted from the upcoming measures.

“The less travel, the more we can contain the virus,” von der Leyen said during a press conference, which followed a video conference between G7 leaders.

The announcement comes as Spain went under partial lockdown in an attempt to stem the worst coronavirus outbreak in Europe after Italy, whose Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte warned yesterday that his country was entering “the riskiest weeks” and urged a coordinated European response to the coronavirus pandemic.

“European coordination on health and economic measures is needed,” Conte told the Corriere della Sera newspaper ahead of a planned videoconference between Group of Seven (G7) leaders.

“It is time for courageous choices and Italy can offer a significant contribution as the country that was the first in Europe to have experienced such a wide spread of the virus,” he said.

Italy was the first EU member state to shutter schools and almost all businesses to try to slow a global pandemic that has killed 1,809 people in the Mediterranean country since last month.

It has recorded more than half the deaths officially reported outside China. “Scientists tell us that we have not yet reached the peak. These are the riskiest weeks and we need the utmost precaution,” said Conte.

Italy is facing two simultaneous threats to its healthcare system. World-class hospitals in the richer north where the overwhelming majority of the deaths and infections have been reported are running out of beds and relying on overstretched staff.

But Conte fears that medical centres in the poorer south, which has largely avoided contagion, will be unable to cope should it be hit just as hard.

“We can no longer afford behavioural errors,” said Conte. “Things like people leaving Milan on weekends to spend time with their family or at their residences in the south must absolutely stop.”

The virus “is our most important challenge of the past decades,” Conte said.

The number of cases globally stood

at 168,250 with 6,501 deaths, across 142 countries and territories yesterday, according to a tally compiled by AFP from official sources.

Turkey yesterday suspended collective mosque prayers, including the important Friday prayer, until further notice to limit the spread of the new coronavirus.

Meanwhile, India last night shut down all educational institutions, gyms, museums, cultural and social centres, swimming pools and theatres till March 31 to contain the spread of coronavirus, our New Delhi correspondent reports.

Students have been advised to stay at home and online education be promoted. India also banned the entry of passengers from member-countries of the European Union, the European Free Trade Association, Turkey and the United Kingdom with effect from March 18 till March 31.

1,000 NEW CASES IN SPAIN

Spain has registered nearly 1,000 new Covid-19 infections over the past 24 hours, raising the total number of cases to 8,744, the health ministry said yesterday.

Over the same period, the number of deaths rose by nine to 297, the ministry’s emergencies coordinator Fernando Simon said.

The figure for new cases was lower than weekend numbers, when 2,000 infections were detected between Saturday and Sunday and the number of deaths rose by around 100.

Of the total number, Madrid remains the worst-affected region, with 4,665 cases.

In order to rein in the virus, Spain has declared a state of alert, shutting all but essential services and ordering its population of 46 million people to stay at home. People are only authorised to go out to buy food or medicine, to go to work or to get medical treatment.

European Union leaders will take part in a crisis videoconference today to coordinate actions to fight the spread of the coronavirus.

Germany yesterday introduced border controls with Austria, Denmark, France, Luxembourg and Switzerland in a bid to stem the coronavirus outbreak.

Only those with a valid reason for travel, like cross-border commuters and delivery drivers, are allowed through, officials said.

COVID-19 VACCINE TRIAL

A clinical trial to test a coronavirus vaccine on human subjects will begin next week, according to a US official.

The first participant was set to receive the experimental vaccine yesterday in order to test for any potential side effects -- but they will not be infected with the virus itself.

The trial is being funded by the National Institutes of Health and will take place in Seattle, the official told the Associated Press. It will begin with 45 healthy volunteers at the Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute.

But even if the tests go well, experts say it could take more than a year to develop and fully test a vaccine.



Students of Dhaka University's Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall leaving the dormitory yesterday. Earlier in the day, the university authorities suspended all academic activities for 11 days from tomorrow amid coronavirus scare.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

CORONAVIRUS SCARE

All educational institutions closed till March 31

Cinemas shut till April 2; no sports events this month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid concern from guardians and falling attendance, the government yesterday announced that all educational institutions would remain closed from March 17-31 as a preventive measure against possible spread of novel coronavirus in the country.

The primary and mass education ministry postponed today’s Mujib Borsho celebration programmes marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. However, the education ministry would organise programmes on a limited scale.

The decision came amid fears of the spread of novel coronavirus as three more Bangladeshis were tested positive for the virus yesterday, raising the number of infected people in the country to eight.

Media reports said many parents recently stopped sending their children to schools, leading to a drop in students’ attendance.

Many guardians hailed the government’s decision of shutting the educational institutions.

Rezwana Parvin, guardian of a schoolchild from the capital’s Mohammadpur, said the decision came as a relief for them.

Education Minister Dipu Moni and State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Zakir Hossain, announced the closure of educational institutions at separate press conferences at their offices at the secretariat.

Speaking at the press conference at her office, the education minister said the decision was taken as a precautionary measure.

“Everyone has to make sure that students stay at home. It is the cabinet’s decision. Educational institutions of all levels -- from pre-primary to higher studies -- will remain closed.”

She said coaching centres would also remain shut. “Students should stay at home. This closure is not for attending coaching classes or go on holidays.”

The education ministry oversees 41,906 schools, colleges, madrasas, and universities, which have 1.94

crore students and 5.59 lakh teachers, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS).

Dipu Moni said any decision regarding the upcoming HSC exams, scheduled to begin on April 1, would be taken when the exam date would get nearer. She said there was no reason for taking the decision now.

The minister said all the school would observe their scheduled programmes marking Mujib Borsho. “Teachers will plant saplings without holding any gathering.”

Earlier, the ministry had decided that each school would plant 100 saplings in and around its campus on March 17.

MUJIB BORSHO EVENTS POSTPONED

State Minister Zakir Hossain said today’s programmes marking Mujib Borsho were postponed.

The primary and mass education ministry cancelled the programme of reading out Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s letter, written to all primary students on Mujib Borsho, by the students.

He also said all classes would remain closed until March 31.

According to BANBEIS, the ministry oversees over 1 lakh primary schools, madrasas, and kindergartens, which have over 1.74 crore students and 4.26 lakh teachers.

PUBLIC UNIVS SHUT

The Dhaka University authorities yesterday announced that the educational institution would remain closed from March 18-28.

“All academic activities will remain suspended from March 18 to 28 to ensure safety of our students,” DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruazzaman said at a press briefing on the campus yesterday morning.

Prof Md Amir Hussain, pro vice-chancellor (administration) of Jahangirnagar University, said the university would remain closed from March 18 to April 2.

All its students have been asked to vacate the residential halls by 11:00am on Thursday.

Authorities of Bangladesh University of Engineering and

Technology (Buet) closed the institution until March 31.

In a notice, they asked all students to leave the campus as the residential halls would remain shut from tomorrow afternoon.

The authorities of Jagannath University, Rajshahi University, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology and Islamic University said their institutions would remain closed from March 18-31.

NU, PSC EXAMS SUSPENDED

In a notice issued yesterday, the National University said it suspended all examinations from March 17-31.

Bangladesh Public Service Commission also suspended all exams from March 17 to 31, said a statement.

The Unesco said an unprecedented number of children, youths and adults are not attending schools or universities because of Covid-19. Governments in 73 countries have announced or implemented the closure of educational institutions in an attempt to slow down the spread of the disease.

According to Unesco monitoring, 56 countries have closed schools nationwide, impacting over 516.6 million children and youths.

CINEMAS CLOSED

Mia Alauddin, adviser to Bangladesh Motion Picture Exhibitors Association, said all cinemas across the country would remain closed from March 18 to April 2.

He, however, said cineplexes would remain open during the period.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel told The Daily Star that all domestic and international games and sports events would remain suspended until April 30 and March 31 respectively.

UNB adds: Labour and Employment Secretary KM Ali Azam yesterday said no decision was taken yet over closing mills and factories amid coronavirus fears.

Speaking to reporters after attending a programme at the secretariat, he said the factory authorities were asked to grant leave to those workers whose relatives returned home from abroad recently.

‘Mugger’ killed in ‘gunfight’ with cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A suspected mugger, who allegedly killed a woman while mugging her in the capital’s Mugda area last month, was killed in a “gunfight” with the Detective Branch of Police (DB) in Khilgaon area early yesterday.

Asaduzzaman, deputy commissioner (east division) of the detective branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said that the dead -- Abdul Mannan alias Mona, 35, -- was the alleged leader of the mugging gang that was responsible for the death of a woman who fell from a rickshaw after muggers snatched her bag.

Earlier on Sunday, police arrested four muggers from the Mugda Stadium area and told media that they were looking for their gang leader Mona.

Later, based on the arrestees’ information, police raided Khilgaon’s Nagdarpar area around 3:00am yesterday to arrest other members of the gang, the DC said.

“Sensing the presence of police, the muggers opened fire. This prompted the law enforcers to fire back, triggering the gunfight during which Mona was shot,” the DB official claimed.

Mona was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

On February 29, Tarina Begum Lipi, 38, died after falling off a rickshaw when a group of muggers attempted to snatch her bag.

Two arrested over rape of schoolgirl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Two people were arrested in a case filed in connection with the rape of a schoolgirl in Tangail’s Bhuapur upazila on Sunday night.

Police arrested them after the victim’s father, who pulls rickshaws in the capital, lodged the case with Bhuapur Police Station against four people that night.

One of the arrestees, Mohammad Zakaria, 20, is from Polshia village in the upazila.

According to the case statement, a classmate of the victim, who is 16 and a 10th grader, used to stalk her on her way to school. He proposed forming a relationship with her. Being refused, he was angry with the girl.

On the night of March 9, the 16-year-old boy, along with his three friends Jibon, 20, Sujan, 23, and Zakaria picked up the girl from in front of her house as she was going to the toilet.

They took her to adjacent Sirajkandi village where Sujan and Zakaria raped her, according to the case statement.

They then let the girl go after threatening her that they would kill her if she disclosed the incident.

After returning home, the girl notified her family members of the incident.

Rashidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Bhuapur Police Station, told The Daily Star that during primary interrogation, the arrestees admitted their involvement in the crime.

The girl was sent to Tangail General Hospital yesterday for medical tests, he said.

Tanvir Ahmed, court inspector in Tangail, told The Daily Star that Senior Judicial Magistrate’s Court of Tangail recorded statements of the two arrestees and later sent them to jail.

Another Tangail court recorded statements of the victim, he added.

The Daily Star is withholding the name of the schoolboy as he is not an adult.

His legacy is our beacon of hope

FROM PAGE 1

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the epitome of courage. In the collective memory, he will always be etched as that towering figure under whose magnificent shadow Bangladesh became a sovereign country.

Tall for an average Bangalee, he had all the traits that underline the making of a political giant. He was a thinker, a strategist and a tough negotiator. His smile radiated confidence and instilled courage in people.

It was his lifelong devotion to the cause of the toiling masses that made him Bangabandhu. He united the nation more than anybody else, first for language and then for political and economic autonomy and finally for independence.

The courage and clarity with which he was steering us to independence gave us a new self-confidence that was hitherto missing.

The greatest Bangalee of a thousand years was born on this day in 1920 to Sheikh Lutfar Rahman and Sheikh Sayera Khatun in Tungipara village under the then Gopalganj subdivision.

His political life began as a humble activist while he was still a student.

Having completed studies from Islamia College in Calcutta in 1947, he took admission in law at Dhaka

University. However, his active involvement in politics led to his expulsion from the university in 1948.

It was also in 1948 when he went to jail, twice. That was but the beginning of a political career that would lead to innumerable spells in incarceration for the future founder of Bangladesh.

In fact, during his lifetime, he spent nearly one-fourth of his time or 4,682 days in prison.

By 1954, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had transformed himself into an activist politician thanks to his involvement in the formation of the Awami Muslim League in June 1949.

In the provincial elections of March 1954, the Awami League played a pioneering role in the creation of the Jukto Front.

Following Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy’s death in 1963, Sheikh Mujib revived the Awami League in January 1964. It was a move which clearly demonstrated his desire to mould the party along the lines he thought would turn it into a voice of the Bangalee masses.

In February 1966, he announced the Six-Point programme of regional autonomy at a conference of Pakistan’s opposition parties in Lahore.

In May that year, he was arrested under the Defence of Pakistan Rules.

While in prison, he was charged, in January 1968, with conspiracy to break up Pakistan through what was given out as the Agartala Conspiracy Case.

At the height of the Agartala conspiracy trial in 1968, he coolly told a western journalist that the Pakistani authorities would not be able to keep him incarcerated for more than six months.

He was freed in seven months.

A mass upsurge forced the withdrawal of the case on February 22, 1969. The next day, at a huge rally at the then Race Course Maidan, Sheikh Mujib was officially honoured by a grateful Bangalee nation as Bangabandhu -- Friend of Bengal.

Bangabandhu led the Awami League to a decisive victory in Pakistan’s first general elections in December 1970.

However, as the Yahya Khan regime and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto began to conspire against the Awami League to deny it the right to form a government at the centre, Bangabandhu went before the nation on March 7, 1971 and delivered what clearly was the finest speech of his career.

He called the struggle one of emancipation and independence. His speech changed the course of the

history of struggle for independence and gave millions of Bangalees a new sense of direction.

As the Pakistan army launched its genocide on March 25, 1971, Bangabandhu declared Bangladesh’s independence early on March 26. He was arrested soon afterward by the army and flown to West Pakistan, to be put on trial on charges of treason.

After a trial in-camera, he was sentenced to death by a military tribunal in early December 1971. An all-out guerrilla war began against the Pakistani oppressive regime and victory achieved on December 16, 1971. It was his political inspiration and moral persuasion that made mass people sacrifice their lives.

Pakistan’s defeat in Bangladesh and the emergence of the Bangalee nation saw him return home a hero on January 10, 1972.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had just fulfilled his life’s dream of freeing his people and giving them an independent country before he was assassinated, along with most of his family members, in a bloody coup in the pre-dawn hours of August 15, 1975.

Bangabandhu was our own. He is our emancipation -- for today and the days to come. The greatest treasure of the Bangalee nation is his legacy.

Mujib Borsho celebrations to launch today

BSS, Dhaka

The nation is set to celebrate the inauguration of Mujib Borsho today, with programmes revised in light of the recent coronavirus cases.

"The celebrations will begin with fireworks at 8pm on Suhrawardy Udyan tomorrow, marking the moment of Bangabandhu's birth," Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, chief coordinator of the birth centenary celebration national implementation committee, told a media briefing yesterday at the International Mother Language Institute (IMLI).

Organisers selected Suhrawardy Udyan for the inauguration, considering the site to be historic as Bangabandhu had delivered his momentous March 7, 1971 speech there.

Chowdhury said the fireworks would be immediately followed by a recorded two-hour long inaugural programme, including addresses to the nation by President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The programme will be aired on all electronic media, including Bangladesh Television (BTV), Bangladesh Betar, online and social media simultaneously, he added.

Bangabandhu's younger daughter Sheikh Rehana will also express her feelings on Bangabandhu during the programme, he added.

Chowdhury said presidents and prime ministers of different countries, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Nepalese President Bidhya Devi Bhandari, Bhutanese Prime Minister Dr Lotay Tshering, Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres and Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Yousef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimen will deliver messages on the occasion.

The inaugural ceremony will end with another fireworks display at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad, Chowdhury added.

Bangabandhu's birthday is a public holiday, and is also observed as National Children's Day.

The countdown for the birth centenary celebrations

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Mujib Borsho Pvt banks to hold special programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All private banks of the country have taken a special programme marking the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

According to the programme details, all staff, including executives of the banks, will stand in line in front of their branches wearing t-shirts and holding placards with the "Mujib Borsho" logo for ten minutes, at 10am tomorrow.

All banking activities will be suspended for ten minutes for the programme.

Chairmen and director of the banks will also stand with t-shirts and placards in front of the head office, according to an official letter issued by the Bangladesh Association of Bankers (BAB) recently.

BAB took the decision to celebrate Mujib Borsho following an executive committee meeting on March 5, reads the letter signed by its secretary general.

Directors of the banks will also cut a cake at their respective banks' boardrooms, while branch

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1 held over death of man in 'drunken scuffle'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A businessman was killed during a scuffle with his friend at the bar of a hotel in the capital's Banani area on March 11, police said yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Shehzad Khan, 45, an export-import businessman.

The incident came in light after Detective Branch of police arrested the accused -- Babu Hawlader (37) from North Badda in the capital early yesterday.

Babu works at a sub-registrar's office in the capital.

"Shehaz and Babu drank alcohol at the bar of Hotel Sweet Dream on

that night. When their bill came to Tk 8,000, an altercation ensued as Babu told Shehzad to share the tab," said Md Golam Saklain, additional deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch (north) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

During a scuffle at the ground floor of the hotel, some staffers mediated the situation.

However, they again engaged in altercation after going out of the hotel around 2am, he said.

"They punched and beat each other. At one point, Shehzad fell down on the street and Babu fled," the DB official added.

Later, some pedestrians took Shehzad to Uttara Crescent Hospital in a CNG-run auto-rickshaw where doctors declared him dead.

Shehzad's brother Kamal Hossain filed a murder case with Banani Police Station on March 11. Later, DB took charge of the investigation.

Morgue sources at Dhaka Medical College said Shehzad's body bore some injury marks. They also collected tissue samples for further assessment.

A Dhaka court granted two-day remand for Babu yesterday, after police produced him before it and

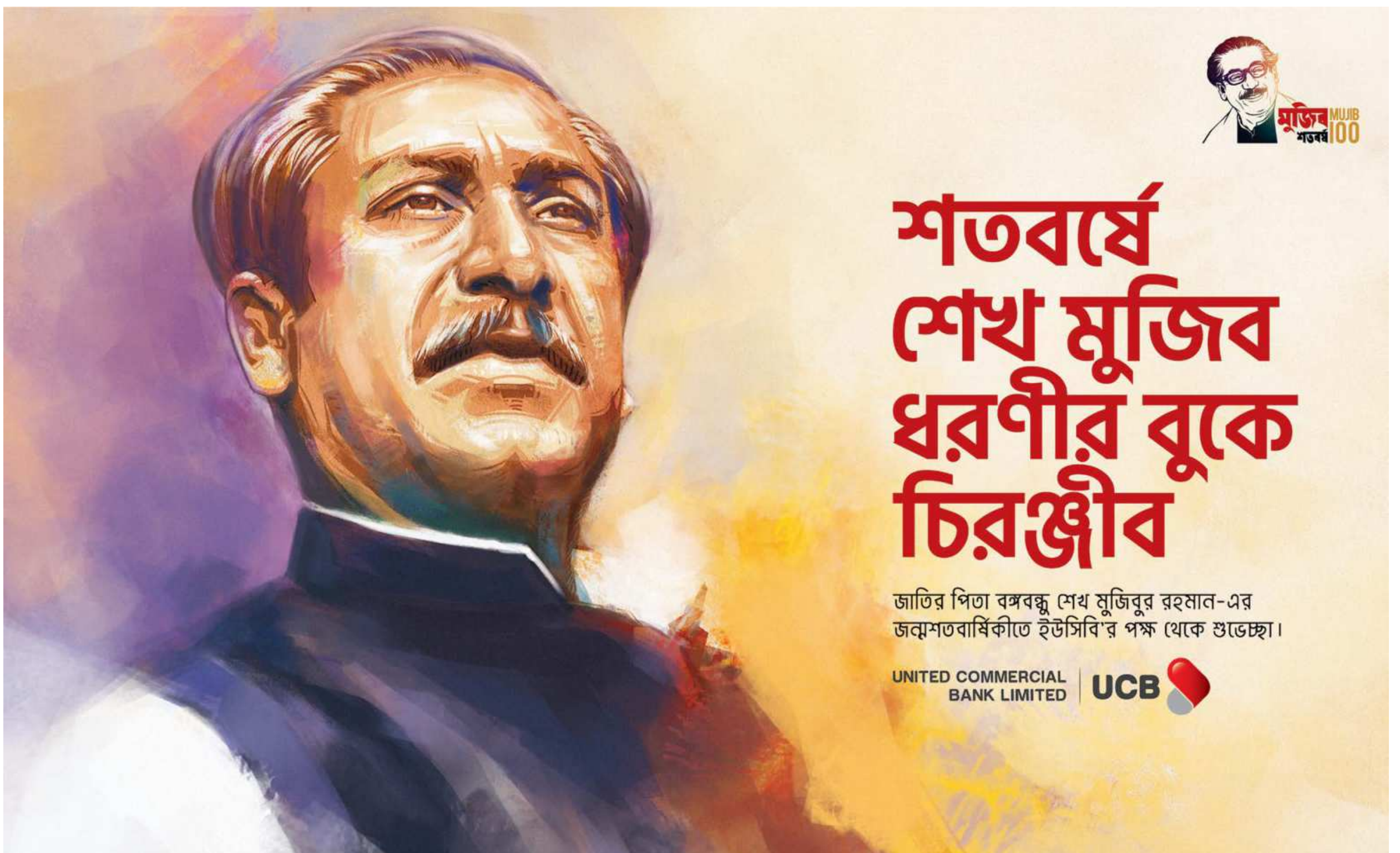
sought seven-day remand.

The Daily Star called a cellphone number from the hotel's website, and a staffer named Hasan answered.

He said police have been investigating the incident. They collected CCTV footage and interrogated some of their staff.

"You will get more information from police," the hotel employee said, refusing to share details of the incident.

Hailing from Bajitpur of Kishoreganj, Shehzad has an export-import company named BK Trade International, said one of his relatives.



Malka Perveen Banu no more

CITY DESK

Malka Perveen Banu -- one of the first female, Muslim singers of Radio Pakistan Dhaka -- passed away yesterday at the capital's United Hospital at the age of 91. Her namaz-e-janaza will be held today in Gulshan Azad Mosque after Zohr prayers. Later, she will be buried in her family's graveyard in Siddique Bazar area of Old Dhaka.

She left behind her sons, daughters-in-law, four grandchildren, two great grandchildren and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn her death. Relatives, friends, and well-wishers can pay their last respects today between 10am and 12 noon at House 10, Road 59, Gulshan 2.



Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Ariful Haque Choudhury observes development work of a road in Zindabazar area yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Passport official

FROM PAGE 5
was switched off.

AD Abzaul joined the Bogura office on February 9 this year. On March 12, ACC filed a case with its Rajshahi office against him for giving passport to an Indian national.

Mamunur Rashid Chowdhury, AD of ACC Dhaka and plaintiff of the case, said the case was filed on Thursday against Abzaul, six other passport officials and Indian citizen Hafez Ahmed.

According to the case statement, Abzaul, who was the then AD of Rajshahi passport office, and other accused provided a Bangladeshi passport to Hafez illegally by hiding and altering relevant documents for personal gain in 2017. After issuing the passport, they destroyed all documents.

Later, Hafez went to Saudi Arabia in 2018 and did not come back ever since. "We have information that there are cases filed against Hafez in India, but we are still unaware of the type of cases," said Mamunur.

Abdul Rashed, a passport seeker waiting on the office premises, said, "I came here to receive my passport, as it showed it's ready for delivery online, but I still couldn't get it."

Others echoed Abdul's experience. Mehedi Hasan of Bogura Sadar upazila said, "I have applied for an emergency passport almost one and half months ago. I came here to receive it today [yesterday], but couldn't get it, as I couldn't find anyone at the counter."

Mujib Borsho celebrations

FROM PAGE 3

began on January 10, coinciding with Bangabandhu's homecoming in 1972 as the founder of the newly-born Bangladesh, after nine months of captivity in Pakistan.

Organisers said the global coronavirus pandemic forced them to scale down the inauguration fanfare, revising the schedule trying to keep most programmes indoors and discourage public gatherings.

The president and the prime minister would lay wreaths at Bangabandhu's mausoleum at Tungipara in Gopalganj this morning, and offer prayers, as per original schedule.

Under the original plan, the celebration was set to be opened on the National Parade Ground, with thousands of people in attendance.

A scheduled gathering of children at Tungipara and in primary schools across Bangladesh tomorrow were also scrapped due to the coronavirus cases.

Different socio-cultural and political organisations from grassroots to national levels, ministries and divisions have drawn up programmes to celebrate the birth

centenary opening.

Ruling Awami League has drawn up revised programmes including hoisting party flags atop all AL offices across the country including Bangabandhu Bhaban and AL's Bangabandhu Avenue central office at 6am today, followed by placing wreaths at his portrait.

Besides, a delegation of the party's central working committee will join AL President Sheikh Hasina at Bangabandhu's mausoleum at Tungipara.

Special prayers will be arranged at all religious institutions across the country, while orphans and destitute people will be distributed special meals.

Marking Mujib Borsho, Bangladesh Bank (BB) will issue regular currency notes and commemorative notes of Tk 200 tomorrow.

Besides, the BB will also issue Tk 100 denomination commemorative gold and silver coins and Tk 100 commemorative notes the same day.

The environment ministry will also plant around one crore of saplings across the country on the occasion.

TIB urges govt

FROM PAGE 5

TIB said in a statement.

After independence, Bangabandhu expressed his concern and disappointment to a section of people for their indulgence in corruption, it said.

Alongside his government's call to boycott the corrupts socially, he called upon common people to stand against them.

Saying that Bangabandhu left behind effective strategies and guidelines against corruption, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman called upon the government, political leaders and other stakeholders to build a corruption-free and well-governed country imbued by the ideology of the Father of the Nation on the occasion of his birth centenary, to ensure transparency and accountability in financing and financial transactions in the country.

Vote for boat

FROM PAGE 5

and violence," he said.

Residents who thronged the area seemed convinced by Rezaul's electoral pledges.

Abdus Shukkur, a resident of Pahartoli who runs a shop, told The Daily Star that like the past mayoral candidates, Rezaul also pledged to address longstanding problems including waterlogging and traffic congestion.

"The past mayors in their election campaigns had also pledged to address these problems, but we do not see any improvement," he said. "New mayoral candidates are also pledging to address these problems... let's see what the next mayor can do!"

Tauhid Chowdhury, another resident, said he felt "curious" to haer Rezaul cautioning prospective voters about coronavirus.

"Will washing our hands protect us from coronavirus infection when we stand in long queues with a huge number of voters at polling centres?" he told this correspondent.

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২ একেজি/সহস্রা	কারা অধিদপ্তর, বাংলাদেশ, ঢাকা।
৩ সহকারী সত্রা	জেলা সুপার, মুন্সীগঞ্জ।
৪ দরপত্রের নাম	বিভিন্ন প্রকার খাদ্যদ্রব্য সরবরাহ।
৫ মেয়াদকাল	০১-০১-২০২০ হতে ৩০-০৬-২০২০ পর্যন্ত সময়ের বিভিন্ন প্রকার খাদ্যদ্রব্য সরবরাহের ওয় বাতের দরপত্র।
৬ দরপত্রের বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর	০৪/২০২০
৭ দরপত্রের প্রকৃতি	সীমিত দরপত্র।
৮ প্রস্তাব দাখিলের তারিখ	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ।
৯ দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	জেলা সুপারের কার্যালয়, জেলা কারাগার, মুন্সীগঞ্জ।
১০ দরপত্র দাখিলের মূল্য	৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ টাকা)।
১১ দরপত্র দাখিলের মেয়াদ	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ/পর্যন্ত।
১২ দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	মুন্সীগঞ্জ জেলা কারাগারের প্রধান ফটক, জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, মুন্সীগঞ্জ ও সদর থানা, মুন্সীগঞ্জ।
১৩ দরপত্র দাখিলের বিধি	২৪-০৩-২০২০ অফিস চলাকালীন ২.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৪ দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	২৫-০৩-২০২০ সকাল ৯.০০ ঘটিকা হতে ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।
১৫ দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২৫-০৩-২০২০ বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
১৬ দরপত্র মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময়	২৫-০৩-২০২০ বেলা ২.০০ ঘটিকা।
১৭ বাজেট ও খরচ প্রাপ্তি উদস	জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড।
১৮ দরপত্র সফলতা অন্যান্য তথ্যাবলী	জানার জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট কারা কর্তৃপক্ষের সাথে (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে) যোগাযোগ করা যেতে পারে।
১৯ কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতীতকে যে কোন/সকল দরপত্র বাতিল/সহ্য করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করলে।	
মেঃ মুহম্মদ হুসাইন ফোন-০২৬৩৯০০০৯৬ জেলা কারাগার, মুন্সীগঞ্জ ফোন ৭৯১১০২১ (সদর)	
জিডি-৫১৯	

No candidate sitting idle

FROM PAGE 5

and Pahartoli areas.

Jannatul has been conducting campaign every day, seeking vote from electorates pledging to take proper initiatives for development of the city.

"I would use taxpayers' money the right way," he said. "I would build a pollution-free modern city, if elected."

Abul Manjur, a mayoral candidate nominated by National Peoples Party, it contesting with the symbol "mango". His posters can be found in Muradpur, Bahaddarhat, Lalkhan Bazar, Wasa intersection and GEC intersection.

He is seeking votes with pledges of a clean and green city.

During a meeting between Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda and mayoral candidates on Saturday, Manjur expressed his apprehension of the polls being free and fair. He urged the CEC to set up a complaint centre in every polling centre, so that any candidate can lodge complaint and get remedy immediately over any irregularities during the polls.

Pvt banks to hold

FROM PAGE 3

offices will also cut cakes, according to programme details.

All bank head offices and branches will capture photographs of their programmes and make three albums. One of those will be sent to the Bangabandhu Memorial Trust through the prime minister, one will be sent to BAB office and the third will be preserved at the respective banks' head offices, reads the programme details.

The banks will also preserve these t-shirts and placards, which will be provided by BAB, to use it at the grand rally scheduled to be held in November. BAB further asked banks to send a photograph of Mujib corner of the member banks' head office to BAB office separately. A documentary video will be made on Mujib corner, which will be showed to the prime minister.

According to sources, there are some 43 private banks in the country, operating through around 10,000 branches. The BAB is supposed to provide about 1.5 lakh t-shirts to the bank staff for the programme, sources added. Meanwhile, state banks of the country will celebrate the birth centenary of Bangabandhu today. According to sources, high officials of state banks will place floral wreaths at Bangabandhu's memorial, and offer prayers at their offices.

BNP complains

FROM PAGE 5

attack aimed at creating panic among BNP activists and supporters, he said.

Assistant Returning Officer Monir Hossen Khan said they received the complaint and will take action after discussing other election officials.

Asked about police obstruction, Nizam Uddin, officer-in-charge of Bakalia Police Station, said, "We did not receive any such complaints, formally or informally. Also, there are restrictions for us to conduct any drive in plainclothes."

BNP CAMPAIGN

During a campaign at Uttar Kattoli, Shahadat Hossain promised to turn Chattogram into a tourist hub, if he is elected.

Shahadat began his campaign from Foy's Lake area, handing out leaflets containing promises of eradicating waterlogging, ensuring smooth transport for lower middle class and a healthy city.

"Kattoli has a unique sea beach and a lot of potential to be a perfect tourist destination," said Shahadat.

Shahadat also delivered speech in Colonel Hat, Olonkar Mor and Akbar Shah areas. Abdullah Al Noman; and Abu Sufian, senior vice president of BNP city unit, also joined the campaign.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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TIB urges govt to ensure transparency in financing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday underscored the need for ensuring transparency in financing and financial transactions to uphold the ideology of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The government has decided to observe the “Mujib Borsho” from March 17, 2020 to March 26, 2021 marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by holding various programmes throughout the year.

Until his last moments, Bangabandhu fought against ethnic repression, political deprivation, economic exploitation, corruption, irregularities, snatching democratic rights and other discrimination,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Ahead of Bangabandhu's birth centenary, a photo installation displays many sides of the father of the nation at the capital's Bijoy Sarani. This photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

BRUTAL MURDER OF TUHIN MIAH
Father, uncle handed death sentence

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The father and an uncle of a five-year-old, who was brutally killed in Sunamganj's Derai upazila on October 14 last year, were sentenced to death in the murder case.

Judge Wahiduzzaman Sikder of Sunamganj District and Sessions Judge's Court yesterday sentenced Tuhin Miah's father Abdul Basir (40) and uncle Nasir Miah (35) to death, said Shamsunnahar Begum, public prosecutor of the court.

After recording testimonies of 26 witnesses, the court delivered its final verdict, acquitting two other uncles of Tuhin, as allegations brought against them were not proven, the public prosecutor said.

The acquitted are Abdul Mosobbir (45) and Jamshed Ali (60).

Earlier on March 10, Sunamganj Juvenile Court Judge Md Jakir Hossain ordered eight-year detention for a 17-year-old cousin of Tuhin, who was also accused in the murder case.

Tuhin's body was found some 200 yards away from his home at Kejaura in Derai. The gruesome condition he was found in -- a mutilated body hanging from a tree -- sent shockwaves across the country.

Police detained Tuhin's father Basir, uncles Mosobbir, Jamshed, Nasir and the cousin.

Tuhin's mother Monira Begum had filed a case with Derai Police Station accusing several unknown.

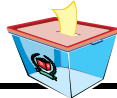
The next day, Nasir and the juvenile cousin confessed before a Sunamganj court, stating that Tuhin was carried out of home by his father before his killing.

Later on December 30, police pressed charge-sheet in this murder case, accusing Tuhin's father, three uncles and the cousin. Accepting the charge, the trial of the case was started on January 7 in the court.

Shamsunnahar Begum, public prosecutor of the court, said, "We are satisfied with the verdict as justice was served in the earliest time."

PORT CITY

POLLS 2020



BNP complains to RO of obstruction in electioneering

Accuses AL activists, police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

BNP leader Abdullah Al Noman yesterday complained to the returning officer that police and Awami League activists are barring BNP supporters from campaigning ahead of March 29 Chattogram City Corporation election.

Noman, also chief election agent of BNP mayoral candidate Dr Shahadat Hossain, submitted a letter to RO Mohammad Hasanuzzaman in this regard.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the complaint.

In the letter, Noman alleged that a group of AL candidate's supporters attacked BNP activists -- who were campaigning in the port city's Nasirabad Polytechnic area -- and vandalised a vehicle and loudspeakers.

Their posters pasted at various points -- including Bokshir Hat and Rajakhali -- were ripped apart by the ruling AL activists, threatening not to paste posters there further, he said.

Police interrupted BNP men while they were pasting posters in Notun Bridge area of Bakolia and intimidated them, the letter added.

Law enforcers in plainclothes raided the residence of a local BNP leader at Hatkhola while he was on the run to avert arrest, Noman mentioned in the complaint.

Abdullah Al Noman told this newspaper that the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

No candidate sitting idle

Five mayor aspirants look to break through AL-BNP cycle

ARUN BIKASH DEY and FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Although somewhat overshadowed by the candidates of Awami League and BNP, five other mayoral aspirants in Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) polls have been conducting their election campaigns in the port city at full strength.

Posters of MA Matin, the mayoral candidate nominated by Bangladesh Islami Front, were seen hanging in different areas including Chawkbazar, Bakalia, KB Aman Ali Road, Bibir Hat, Hamzarbagh, Oxygen and Muradpur areas.

Matin, who is contesting with the "candle" symbol, told The Daily Star that he has been conducting campaigns in two to three wards a day.

"I am getting a very good response from voters," he said. "I am pledging voters of addressing longstanding civic problems in the city."

"City dwellers have been facing a number of problems including waterlogging, poor sewage system and traffic congestion for years... The past mayors had pledged voters to address those but failed."

"All the canals and drains have been filled with garbage that will worsen waterlogging in the rainy season," said Matin.

"Waterlogging can be addressed in a year... all that it needs is the right intention," he said. "I urge voters to vote for me, and I promise to address the problems, if elected."

Posters of Wahed Murad, a mayoral candidate nominated by Islamic Front Bangladesh, were seen in different areas of the port city. Murad has been contesting in the polls with the electoral symbol "chair".

He has been conducting campaign urging the voters to vote for him. He conducted campaign in Bakalia yesterday.

Wahed said he would run the CCC taking suggestion from all the stakeholders irrespective of political identity for the development of the city, if voted to mayor.

"Our city has been facing many problems... we can develop the city to a modern one," Wahed told The Daily Star, adding, "The city dwellers are now annoyed with the leaders of two big political parties as they just give

promises during campaign but that are not kept in the later."

"Lack of coordination between the service providing institutions is the main hindrance to the development of the city," he said, adding, "I will address the problem, if elected."

Khokan Chowdhury, an independent mayoral candidate, is vying in the polls with the symbol "elephant". He was also seen busy with campaigning since his main electoral camp was inaugurated in Agrabad on Friday. He distributed leaflets in Agrabad and adjacent areas on the first day, and has been continuing campaign at other wards.

Khokan said he would like to be a servant of city dwellers. "The chair of mayor is for providing service to city dwellers," he said. "I would not sit on this chair, rather I would put in relentless efforts to address the existing problems in the city, if elected."

Posters and banners of Jannatul Islam, nominated by Islami Andolan Bangladesh with the symbol "hand fan", were seen hanging in Halishahar, Bandar, Double Mooring

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Vote for boat, wash hands with soap: Rezaul to voters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Awami League (AL) mayoral candidate for Chattogram City Corporation polls Rezaul Karim Chowdhury yesterday conducted campaign at different wards of the port city, urging citizens to vote for him.

Rezaul started the campaign in Pahartoli (ward-13) area around 3pm. A good number of leaders and activists of AL and its associate organisations were with him.

He moved on to the area and circulated electoral leaflets to the residents. He also addressed people in different spots.

Rezaul urged voters to be cautious about Coronavirus and maintain proper hygiene to protect it.

"Wash your hands with soap and vote for boat," he urged voters.

His activists also chanted the slogan, "Wash your hands with soap and vote for boat."

"Vote for me and I will not increase holding tax if I am elected mayor," he told voters.

Rezaul also pledged to address longstanding problems in the city including waterlogging, traffic congestion and sewerage.

"I want to build a modern city, which will be one of the panoramic cities in southeast Asia," he said.

"I want to make Chattogram clean, and free of drugs

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Passport official in Bogura 'on leave' after ACC files case

He is accused of issuing passport to Indian national

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

The assistant director (AD) of Bogura regional passport office went on a leave after Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed a case against him for issuing passport to an Indian national.

Due to this, issuance of new machine-readable passports (MRP) has stopped since the last two days, causing sufferings to people.

Other office officials cannot contact him as the phone number of AD Md Abzaul Alam is switched off for the last two days.

Contacted, Shahidul Islam, superintendent of Bogura regional passport

office, said, "We got around 250 new passports in last two days, but we can't deliver them without the AD's signature; we can't contact him over phone."

AD Abzaul Alam has been on a four-day casual leave since Sunday. He's supposed to join the office on Thursday, Shahidul said.

Another official, seeking anonymity, said, "We're not sure whether the AD will return to office, as we heard that ACC filed a case against him."

"We informed the matter to the Dhaka head office," he said.

This correspondent tried several times to contact the AD over phone, but his phone

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

CORONAVIRUS

3 telcos, Unilever ask employees to work from home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Multinational consumer product company Unilever, and telecom operators Robi, Grameenphone and Banglalink yesterday asked employees to stay at home and work online where possible, as a preventive measure against coronavirus.

A message posted on Unilever's website said, "On 14 March 2020, our global CEO Alan Jope has announced that all our office-based employees globally should work from home and this protocol will go live in all markets."

Similarly, in a message from Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory officer of Robi Axiata Ltd, the telco said it was "encouraging" its workers to work from home.

"Ensuring sound health of our employees and their family members is always a matter of priority for us," the message reads.

Meanwhile, the management of Grameenphone issued a notice to its employees in this regard, said Md Hasan, head of external communication of the company.

"Safety is our foremost concern; we have been preparing to keep our employees and associated business partners safe following the standard guidelines provided by relevant authorities," he said in a statement, adding that employees engaged in roles that are not customer-facing have been encouraged to work from home.

Banglalink also issued a similar notice. "In light of the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 and pandemic declaration by WHO, Banglalink -- being a socially responsible company -- is actively monitoring the situation," it reads, adding that it has decided to implement "work from home" for most employees for two weeks starting March 18 except for essential services.

Two luxury cars seized in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Officials of Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate seized two luxury cars in the port city yesterday.

A Nissan X-Trail and a Subaru Impreza WRX were seized in separate drives in Khalishahar and Khulshi areas on allegations of duty evasion, said officials.

Abdul Ahad, assistant commissioner of CIID, said owners of the cars could not provide any documents of the vehicles.

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ইতালী ও অন্যান্য দেশ থেকে যারা সম্প্রতি দেশে ফিরেছেন তাদের কর্তৃপক্ষের নজরদারিতে ১৪ দিন পর্যন্ত হোম কোয়ারেন্টাইন বাধ্যতামূলক।

আপনার অবস্থান অবিলম্বে স্থানীয় প্রশাসন ও স্বাস্থ্য কর্তৃপক্ষকে জানান।

নাগরিক সাধারণকেও এ ব্যাপারে প্রশাসনকে সাহায্য করার অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে। আইন লঙ্ঘন করলে জেল বা জরিমানা বা উভয় দণ্ড হতে পারে।

অধ্যাপক ডাঃ আবুল কালাম আজাদ
মহাপরিচালক, স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর

স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর

স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়

যেন হাজার বছর শুনি, তোমার প্রতিধ্বনি

জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান-এর জন্মশতবার্ষিকীতে জানাই বিনম্র শ্রদ্ধা

evaly

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA TUESDAY MARCH 17, 2020, CHAITRA 3, 1426 BS

Ariful-alive to reveal his ordeal

What if he didn't make bail?

IT is a frightening thought that had Ariful Islam, the Kurigram correspondent of Bangla Tribune, not been granted bail, we may not have known the terrifying ordeal of a citizen being picked up, mercilessly tortured and even threatened with “crossfire”. It is because many individuals have been similarly picked up only to end up as bodies, either during “shootouts” or after “falling ill” while in custody. Thankfully, Ariful is alive to tell the tale of arbitrary arrest and torture.

According to news reports, Senior Assistant Commissioner Nazim Uddin of Kurigram, along with police and Ansar men, and two magistrates, broke into Ariful’s home, beat him up, blindfolded him and then dragged him into a vehicle. A mobile court then sentenced him to one year in prison on charges of possessing drugs. It has been alleged that Ariful was framed because of his reports on the alleged corruption of Kurigram’s DC.

It is reassuring to note that the High Court has taken some decisive steps after a writ petition was filed by the executive editor of the paper Ariful worked for. The HC has asked for the reason behind Ariful’s sentencing of one year in jail as well as the copy of the verdict, and challenged the legality of Ariful’s arrest and conviction. It has also asked the government whether rules about entering someone’s home at midnight was followed and whether it was necessary for the involvement of 30 to 40 people.

The details of Ariful’s arrest and the way he was tortured and threatened with death from crossfire gives a picture of how upholders of the law can become the biggest abusers of the law. The incident occurred after Ariful had written a report on how Kurigram DC Sultana Pervin had re-excavated and renovated a pond with government funds and individual donations and named the pond after herself. Ariful’s colleagues and family believe that this invited the wrath of the DC. The way he was picked up and tortured makes it difficult not to believe this allegation. Nazim Uddin, moreover, is notorious for torturing people—there is video footage of him torturing an elderly man.

So what are we to deduce from this terrifying incident? That anyone, anywhere, can be picked up in the middle of the night, be blindfolded and then beaten and left to rot in jail without due process? That it is very easy to incriminate a person on false charges? That a person may come out of such a situation alive only when he has some influence or if his case is widely publicised on social media?

The DC has been withdrawn from her post. We fervently hope that the authorities will be able to answer the questions asked by the HC and seriously take steps to address the human rights violations that take place when a person is picked up by members of law enforcement and taken away. The culture of arbitrary arrest, torture and death in custody of people who are denied due process of the law must stop.

Panic killed a young woman in DMCH

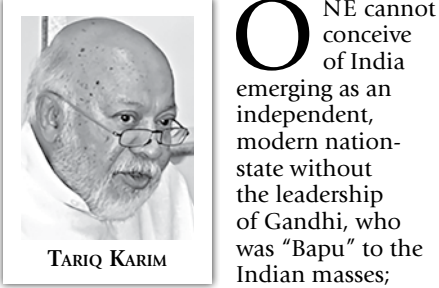
Raises questions about our preparedness for a coronavirus outbreak

WORDS are not enough to express our shock at the tragedy that took place at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) on March 14, where a 24-year-old female patient died because of the negligence of doctors and staff, all of whom fled the ward she was admitted to, suspecting her as a COVID-19 patient. The young woman, an undergraduate student at a university in Canada, returned to Dhaka last week and was admitted to DMCH with gastrointestinal complications. According to our report, the doctors and staff refused to approach the patient when they learnt that she was a Canada-returnee, since DMCH was not equipped to test patients for coronavirus and the medical staff did not have protective suits.

The incident again brings to light the fact that we—the government, medical staff, as well as people in general—are far from being prepared to deal with a possible coronavirus outbreak. It is simply not understandable why the DMCH, being the best public hospital in the country, does not have the protective gear ready, including masks and gloves, since they have to deal with various types of infectious diseases every day. Also, when the whole country is in panic about COVID-19—given the fact that a large number of Bangladeshis living in countries affected by the virus returned recently and that there are now some confirmed coronavirus cases here—how judicious is it on the part of the government to let only the Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) test people with signs and symptoms of the virus? Although the young woman was tested negative for coronavirus, it took a long time to get her tested because the doctors at DMCH had to first call the IEDCR officials to come and collect her blood and other samples. By the time the test result reached DMCH, it was too late.

We have some lessons to learn from this case. One, all the public and private hospitals must be prepared and have the basic protective gear to deal with an infectious disease like COVID-19. Despite the directives given by the Directorate General of Health Services to all hospitals in this regard, our hospitals do not seem to be prepared at all. Also, the government should reconsider its decision about giving the sole authority to test the disease to the IEDCR. If the DMCH had the necessary testing kits, they could have tested the young woman earlier which might have avoided the panic that led to her being left unattended. At the same time, the government should prepare specific hospitals to treat coronavirus patients without further delay. Panic might kill more people; only proper precautions can save us.

Bangabandhu and his timeless exhortations to the nation



ONE cannot conceive of India emerging as an independent, modern nation-state without the leadership of Gandhi, who was “Bapu” to the Indian masses; or of South Africa wrestling independence from a brutalising apartheid regime without the leadership of Nelson Mandela (or “Madiba” to his adoring people). Neither can one imagine the birth of Bangladesh without Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (endearingly called “Bangabandhu” by his people) and his towering and inspiring leadership that enabled us to triumph in our War of Liberation. All three nations were galvanised to seek independence by a combination, in varying degrees, of the potent mixture of cultural denigration, economic discrimination and deprivation, and political disenfranchisement inflicted upon them by their oppressive colonial or neo-colonial masters. While all of these elements had pre-existed in varying stages of gestation in each of the three countries for some time, and had been fulminating in varying stages of pre-explosion, each needed a leader of towering intellectual and moral stature and all-pervasive charisma to emerge at the right time, to provide the leadership required to give fruition to the raging socio-political process of national metamorphosis.

In Bangladesh, it was unquestionably Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s indomitable spirit, towering personality and larger-than-life charisma that transformed the Awami League party to provide the logical platform for espousing the national aspirations of the Bengalis of East Pakistan and lead the charge for final emancipation and independence. An extraordinary orator, unparalleled in our living memories, his impassioned speech on March 7, 1971 has been recognised by the UNESCO as an important part of world heritage, and rightly so—it was the inspirational spark for the birth of a nation. And so, unquestionably, Bangabandhu is truly and universally hailed as the “*Jatir Janak*” or “*Jatir Pita*”, the father of the nation that emerged as Bangladesh 49 years ago.

Today, as the nation celebrates his birth centenary, it would behoove us all, leaders and ordinary citizens alike, to revisit his speeches, reflect on his messages, counsel and exhortations, and seek inspiration to renew ourselves afresh. To my mind, after going through a number of Bangabandhu’s numerous speeches, his speech of March 7, 1971 and of January 11, 1975 leapt out from the past, larger than life.

On March 7, 1971, recapitulating the long history of perfidy and betrayal by

the oppressive military dictatorship and the cabal of self-serving West Pakistani politicians, and exposing their conspiracy in denying the people of Bangladesh their just rights and demands, he was putting the military dictatorship on notice: respect the results of the elections of 1970, or face the consequences. At the same time, quite aware of the imminent danger to him personally and to his closest associates, he was also fearlessly exhorting the Bengali people to be prepared to fight relentlessly to wrest their rights, with or without his direct leadership, with whatever they had, wherever they were situated. In that speech, the target of his wrath and outrage was external: the treacherous West Pakistani military junta. But in that rousing clarion call to his own people,

Westminster-form of parliamentary democracy, he had two weeks earlier on December 24, 1974, declared a state of emergency and assumed all powers as President of the republic. In that speech, he expressed a sense of gratification that his long-cherished dreams of an independent Bangladesh with its own military academy, to build up and train its army, had materialised after many decades of relentless struggle against successive West Pakistani-dominated totalitarian regimes. He revealed his deep sense of gratitude to the Almighty and a bursting pride that he had lived to witness, in his lifetime, the graduation of the first batch of cadet officers of this new national institution—something that he had not been sure he would have the good fortune to see. Congratulating

bureaucrats present he said, categorically: “Don’t blacken my face... don’t blacken the face of the nation... civil servants are not masters, they serve the people, don’t be oppressors.... No nation can grow without discipline.... Responsibility to oneself and the country is most important; without responsibility and discipline, no country has been able to achieve anything.” He urged all: his own countrymen, military officers and troops, and civilian bureaucrats, to fight against the scourge of corruption, cheating and oppressive administration. He had led the struggle against the Pakistani oppressors; he was now going to relentlessly lead the charge of this new struggle against these scourges. He exhorted: all must “learn to serve, be honest, be righteous, be disciplined, and stay on the right path”.

This repetitive and emphatic theme of discipline and responsibility takes us all back to the final words of his speech of March 7, when he was spurring his countrymen to embark on their struggle for liberation from the oppressive Pakistani military junta. The speech on January 11, 1975 completes the thematic circle. Then, the struggle was against the external enemy. Now, the struggle was against the internal enemy, within the nation itself. Nothing happens in a day—the struggle must be relentless, ceaseless, and ever continuing.

Those exhortations of the great man, our Bangabandhu, our “*Jatir Janak*,” asserted almost fifty years ago are perhaps even more relevant today, when wanton indiscipline and brazen impunity against all sorts of authority, at every conceivable level, seems to have become endemically, pervasively, deep-set and deep-rooted. We won our War of Liberation, yes. But have we progressed anywhere close to winning the war of self-emancipation? Have we imbibed anything, at all, of what we had been called upon to follow and do, by that great man, who we all mechanically, like soulless robots, hail as the nation’s father? We have wrested independence, we are all “*shadhin*”, but are we free? We all demand our rights, for this, for that, for everything. Have we developed any sense of responsibility at all, not just to ourselves (in the very selfish sense), but also to our fellow citizens? Do we at all realise, or even comprehend, that one’s individual needs, and rights, end where the parameters of one’s fellow citizens’ rights and needs commence?

Bangabandhu, in his final days, laid a very onerous responsibility on our collective shoulders. It should hang even more heavily on those who inherited and carry his mantle today. I cannot imagine Bangabandhu’s soul resting peacefully in his heavenly abode when he looks down upon our many transgressions, at multiple levels, all across the beloved “*Shonar Bangla*” that he gave his life for.

Tariq Karim is a retired ambassador and currently Senior Fellow at the Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB).



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman speaks at a news conference in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in 1972. PHOTO: LAURENT/ASSOCIATED PRESS

he also had a note of caution that a wise general would impart to his troops before launching them in battle: “The struggle this time is for emancipation! The struggle this time is for independence! Be disciplined. No nation’s movement can be victorious without discipline.”

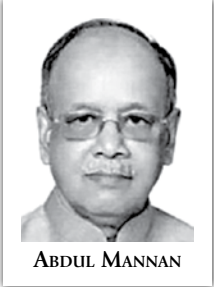
On January 11, 1975, however, in his address at the passing out (graduation) ceremony at the Bangladesh Military Academy of the first batch of Bangladeshi army cadet officers recruited after the independence of the country in 1971, his message was first to his fledgling armed forces, then to the civil and military bureaucrats, and then indeed to the entire nation. This was also an impassioned speech that contained a lot of anguish and angst within it, deeply imbedded in his tone, tenor and choice of words. A committed, life-long votary of people’s rights and advocate of the

the cadets on successfully passing their rigorous training regime, he said: the end of training means the beginning of a new task (of nation-building), and a deep sense of responsibility to people and country. He asserted: “We are the owners of this land now, finally. Nothing (nation-building) can happen in a day.”

But then, the pent-up anguish within him burst out, spontaneously, palpably, emotionally. He recounted how he, over the three years since his return, had become increasingly distressed by the many signs of a malaise that he witnessed afflicting the new nation: of bribery, corruption, thievery and maladministration by the bureaucracy that all together, hurt the people. He lashed out against black markets, corruption and the shameless cheating that served to keep the ordinary man in deep poverty. Addressing directly the

SHEIKH MUJIB

A natural born leader



in Sonargaon near Dhaka, and another part settled in Gopalganj. Mujib was part of the seventh generation in the Sheikh family, the eldest son of Sheikh Lutfur Rahman and Saira Khatun.

From an early age, Mujib protested against anything which he thought was not right. In 1937, he was admitted into the Gopalganj Mission School. In this district, Muslims and Dalits were minorities and it was difficult for them to sit in the front row of any class. Young Mujib refused to take this easily. On the very first day of school, he sat in the front bench. Eyebrows were raised but Mujib remained defiant. The class teacher Girish Babu ignored the incident.

After passing high school, Sheikh Mujib was sent to Kolkata to study at the Islamia College (now Maulana Azad College) in 1942 and his days there shaped his political future, as he came into contact with politicians from both Muslim League and Congress. That was a time when Netaji Subhas Bose and Gandhi’s movement against the British rule in India was gaining momentum while the Second World War was destroying Europe. Just before Mujib arrived, Netaji Subhas Bose escaped India for Germany. Mujib’s early political life was influenced by politicians like Netaji, Gandhi, A K Fazlul Huq, Huseyn Suhrawardy, Sarat Chandra Bose and Abul Hashim.

In 1943, because of the flawed policy of the British Government, Bengal was ravaged by a devastating famine in which an estimated five million people starved to death. From his school days, Mujib was a good organiser, and he immediately organised relief teams to help the starving people of Kolkata and Gopalganj. During this time, Khajia Nazim Uddin of Muslim League was the Prime Minister (now called Chief Minister) of Bengal and Hussein Shaheed Suhrawardy was given the portfolio of Food Minister. Mujib’s humanitarian work brought him near to Suhrawardy, who later on became his political guru.

The famine of Bengal brought about a total change, particularly in the thoughts of the politicians of Bengal.

The political leaders of Muslim League, Congress and other minor parties were convinced that to improve the socio-economic conditions of the common people, the British must leave India and give India its much deserved independence.

There were a number of alternatives as to what would happen to India if and when the British leave. Would India be one country as perceived in the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946? Mujib wrote in *The Unfinished Memoirs*: “According to it (the plan), defence, foreign office and the ministry of communications would stay with the central government while the remaining ministries would revert to the provinces. Later, however, the Congress reneged on its commitment to the plan. As a result, the Cabinet Mission plan had to be abandoned.” Under this plan, India would be a federal state and the division of India would be avoided. Gandhi even proposed that the first Prime Minister of India should be Jinnah. Nehru was not convinced.

Mujib writes, “The British, it seemed to me, were eager to hand over power to Congress (the larger of the two parties) and leave India as soon as possible. But Muhammad Ali Jinnah knew the Congress and the British government well, and it wasn’t easy to deceive someone like him. Jinnah declared that August 16, 1946 would be the “Direct Action Day”—a day to demonstrate Muslim solidarity for a separate land for them. He issued a statement urging everyone to observe this day peacefully. He wanted to show the British government that ten crore Muslims of India were determined to achieve Pakistan at any cost. The Congress and Hindu Mahasabha leaders began to issue statements claiming that “Direct Action Day” was really directed against them.”

The Muslim League leaders tried their best to maintain calm on that day but unfortunately the people of both communities got involved in riots where thousands of innocent people lost their lives. Mujib and his young political workers tried their best to protect people from both communities, but the toll was quite heavy. The rioting lasted three days. This one single incident changed the political career of young Mujib, and to him, the division of India became inevitable.

On the stroke of midnight on August 14, 1947, India—the land that had remained united for time immemorial—fell victim to the unholy intentions of selfish politicians and the shrewd British, and was divided into India and Pakistan. That single event destroyed the peace and harmony of the region forever.

Young Mujib relocated himself from Kolkata to Dhaka and for a while remained active with the Muslim League. However, Jinnah’s visit to Dhaka in March 1948

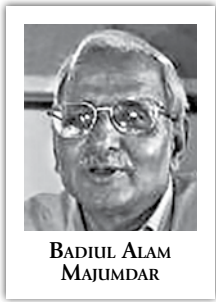
changed his vision of politics for ever. Jinnah, the first Governor General of Pakistan, did not speak a word of Urdu but addressed a public rally in Ramna racecourse in English to say that Urdu—a language spoken by only 5 percent of the people of Pakistan (mostly migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar)—shall be the state language of Pakistan. This declaration was the first nail in the coffin of united Pakistan. The people, and later the students of the University of Dhaka, protested this irresponsible statement. Mujib, although he was a brilliant organiser, knew very well that such sporadic protests would not serve any purpose. To turn the protests into an organised movement, they needed an organisation, and the East Pakistan Muslim Student League was born in 1948. This was Mujib’s first step into politics, as a student leader. The following year, East Pakistan Awami Muslim League (later to be renamed as East Pakistan Awami League) was born, and Mujib played a key role in making this happen.

Mujib’s political career spread over 23 years of Pakistan and he had to spend 13 years of it in prison. Awami League was banned on a number of occasions by the military rulers of Pakistan. This was the only party which was considered a threat to the unity of Pakistan. Mujib faced death on two separate occasions, once during the Agartala Conspiracy Case and second during the Liberation War in 1971. It was only his courage and the people who loved him that stood in between. After his release from prison in 1969, preceded by a mass movement, he earned the title Bangabandhu—the Friend of Bengal. After his unprecedented victory in the general election of 1970, followed by the nine-month bloody War of Liberation, Mujib was crowned as the father of a new nation. Mujib lived only 52 years before he, along with his family members, were brutally murdered on the fateful night of August 15, 1975. During his lifetime, not only did he see the history and geography of this subcontinent change; he was part of it. He lived under three flags, the British at birth till Partition, Pakistan until 1971 and later on, he lived under the flag of Bangladesh, which he was instrumental in creating. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a true leader who had vision and could see the future. May his soul rest in peace and his memories live forever. History remembers only heroes, villains are forgotten. Joseph Campbell, an American Professor of Literature, wrote: “A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself.” No words could be truer than these when one assesses the contribution of Mujib to the history of this nation.

Abdul Mannan is a former Chairman, University Grants Commission of Bangladesh.

From Sheikh Mujib to Father of the Nation

Bangabandhu as I knew him



BADIUL ALAM MAJUMDAR

movement of the early 1960s. It is through this that I first got to know Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The 1969 movement was carried out from the then Iqbal Hall and I was the elected General Secretary of the Hall Union at the time, which give me the opportunity to know many stalwarts of that movement, including then DU Central Student Union Vice President Tofail Ahmed, since we were elected from the same panel.

Sheikh Mujib, as a politician, began to distinguish himself from his peers from the early 1960s. He was then the General Secretary of East Pakistan Awami League and the disciple of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, the great proponent of liberal democracy. What distinguished Sheikh Mujib was that he was an ardent proponent of the “Bengali identity” of the people of East Pakistan. For that reason, he was hated by the political establishment of Pakistan.

There is no denying the fact that Pakistan was created on the basis of the “Muslim identity” of the Indian subcontinent. However, for various reasons, the attractiveness of that identity began to fade over time for our people, a milestone of which was the Language Movement. Sheikh Mujib, through his active involvement in that movement, provided leadership in bringing this Bengali identity into prominence.

Even after the Language Movement, Sheikh Mujib’s leadership in promoting the Bengali identity continued. In 1956, it was proposed in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly that Pakistan could be divided into two units—East and West Pakistan—in order to make the central government stronger. During this debate, Sheikh Mujib appealed for the recognition of the Bengali identity and language. In his speech, he stated: “You will see that they want to place the word “East Pakistan” instead of “East Bengal”. We had demanded so many times that you

should use Bengal instead of Pakistan. The word “Bengal” has a history, has a tradition of its own. You can change it only after the people have been consulted. So far as the question of one unit (of Pakistan) is concerned, it can come in the Constitution. Why do you want it to be taken up just now? What about the state language, Bengali? We will be prepared to consider one unit with all these things. So I appeal to my friends on that side to allow the people to give their verdict in any way, in the form of referendum or in the form of plebiscite.”

Clearly, in view of the burgeoning disparity between East and West Pakistan, our sense of Bengali identity began to be stronger. In that backdrop, Sheikh Mujib unveiled his six point formula, the goal of which was not only to end the disparity and deprivation, but also to gain the recognition of our Bengali identity. As a result, it caught the imagination of the people of East Pakistan and became included in the students’ 11 point formula. I was a small organiser in both of these movements and an eyewitness.

Because of the six point formula’s becoming the demand of Bengalis of all walks of life, Sheikh Mujib, a boy born in an unknown village in Tungipara, became Bangabandhu—the symbol of the hopes and aspirations of our people. In recognition, Tofail Ahmed, on behalf of all of us, bestowed on him this title in a mass gathering held in the Paltan ground.

The continuous ignorance of the legitimate demands of the people of East Pakistan, and the repressive measures against Sheikh Mujib and his associates by the Pakistani rulers, turned the demand for autonomy into a demand for self-determination. Sheikh Mujib became the undisputed leader of that movement. Through a bloody War of Liberation carried out in Sheikh Mujib’s name, Bangladesh became independent in 1971, and this 51-year old prisoner in a Pakistani jail became the father of independent Bangladesh.

It is clear that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became Bangabandhu, notwithstanding his lack of a dynastic heritage, by winning the hearts and minds of the people. During his time, there were many other politicians in East Pakistan who were in no way less talented. Many had higher educational qualifications, more family influence and greater financial strength; yet no



PHOTO: COLLECTED

one could come close to him in terms of achievements.

What did Bangabandhu have that his contemporaries did not?

In my judgment, he had some unique qualities that others lacked. He could feel the pulse of the Bengalis and articulate their hopes and aspirations. It was no wonder then, that many of his fellow politicians were critical of and created hurdles for him. Only for the support of the student community, and later the general public, could he succeed.

Bangabandhu could understand the unexpressed feelings of the people because he loved them dearly. He was also in politics for their wellbeing, not for any personal gains. In his own words, he believed that: “Bangladesh, with its abundance of water and fertile soil, is full of wealth. Very few other countries in the world have such

fertile land. Yet they are poor. From time immemorial, they were exploited because of their own shortcomings (the most serious of which is envy). They do not know them and until they know and understand themselves, their liberation will not come”.

Bangabandhu not only loved the people and was in politics for them, he was also willing to make any sacrifice for them. He believed that “achieving anything great requires sacrifice and persistence. Those who are not willing to make sacrifices cannot achieve anything worthwhile”. Throughout his life, he paid heed to his father’s advice to show “sincerity and honesty of purpose” and spent most of his adult life in jail. If there was no mass movement to free him, he would definitely have been given the death penalty in the Agartala Conspiracy case and sacrificed his life for his people.

The quality that separated Bangabandhu from the rest was his indomitable courage. The intimidation and repression of the rulers could not deter him. He took a firm stand against the tyranny of the Pakistani rulers. He believed that “in a democratic country, there should be many political parties and the law is expected to have that provision”. He also believed that criticism of the government is an essential feature of a democratic polity and “if opposition party cannot be created, the country will have autocracy”. The strength of his courage helped him overcome all the hurdles in his path to reach the height he was able to reach.

Most importantly, Bangabandhu, in his lifetime, could transform himself. When he was growing up, communal politics was the order of the day and his incomplete autobiography, *The Unfinished Memoirs*, contains many such examples. He himself was a victim of communalism in his early life. In his childhood, when living in Gopalganj, he once heard that his friend Malek had been abducted and was being beaten up. He assembled a group and rescued Malek in the face of resistance. A case was filed and he was subsequently arrested. Even though he grew up in an environment of communal politics, Bangabandhu was able to overcome such a mindset. Instead, he embraced our Bengali identity and included secularism in Bangladesh’s constitution. We see such examples of transformation only in the lives of great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela.

As the leader of my early life, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was able to make my blood rage and arouse patriotism in me. He was able to instill in me the values of telling the truth, showing courage in the face of adversity and making differences in the lives of others. On the occasion of the centennial of his birth, I offer my heartfelt respect to the memory of this extraordinary human being. I pray for his departed soul. At the same time, I pray so that I can, for the rest of my life, stay true to the principles and ideals he taught me as a young man. I feel that that is the most appropriate way to show respect to him.

Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar is Secretary of SHUJAN: Citizens for Good Governance.

Recognition, as equals

Tracing Bangabandhu's role in forming the principles of diplomacy and garnering international support for the newly-founded Bangladesh



MANNAN MASHHUR ZARIF

recognition to Bangladesh, followed by India only hours later.

This particular Indian reaction to the developments in our struggle for freedom came in response to successive appeals made from the highest level of the Mujibnagar Government to the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, first on October 15, 1971 and later on November 23, 1971, to confer immediate recognition to the sovereign People’s Republic of Bangladesh. This meant that a milestone had been achieved—while the nation was struggling to attain victory in a war that was still raging, its independence was recognised by two neighbouring nations.

For those who had been campaigning on various political fronts for international support for the armed guerrilla struggle in hitherto East Pakistan, the focus had now shifted to securing acknowledgement of its existence as the youngest nation in the world, which, in a bipartisan globe of the post-World War II era, would be no easy feat.

The military hostility between Bangladesh and Pakistan that ended on the evening of December 16, 1971 saw new battle lines being drawn. From day one, Pakistan engaged itself in a smear campaign against the true case of the emergence of Bangladesh. For decades since independence in 1947, Pakistan found themselves an ally in the United States of America, and a longstanding friend in China. Their role in the Muslim world was an important one, as it had been the most populous Islamic nation of that time.

In the military conflict that spanned between March 25, 1971 and December 16, 1971, India had been our closest supporter; on an international platform, it was followed by assistance extended by the Soviet Union. This alone was enough for the world to perceive that the foreign policy of the new nation, if it ever saw the light of day, might be aligned to the socialist block.

During the Liberation War of 1971, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi travelled extensively around the world to present the cause of Bangladesh, and as time went by, made a wholehearted effort to justify the impending military action. Upon his release from jail in Pakistan, post December 16, the stage was set for the hero to return home.

While in transit at London, Bangabandhu made a call to PM Gandhi, thanking her for the overwhelming support her administration and the nation of India had extended to Bangladesh and for the recognition that was accorded well in advance of eventual victory in the war. Upon his return to Dhaka, Bangabandhu took the oath as Prime Minister and unequivocally expressed his will that the nation shall maintain a non-partisan stance in international relations, along non-aligned lines. Bangabandhu expressed his desire to make Bangladesh the “Switzerland of the East”.

By the time Bangladesh applied for membership of the United Nations in September 1972, it had already been recognised as an independent entity by most nations of the globe, including strategically important recognition coming from the United Kingdom and the USA as early as February and April 1972 respectively.

The first people to establish diplomatic relations with Bangladesh were the countries of Eastern Europe, particularly the signatories of the Warsaw Pact. The German Democratic Republic (East Germany) took the lead on January 11; the USSR gave recognition on January 24.

This was followed by a series of successes with the nations of the

European Union, and eventually countries from all over the world—including Australia, Canada, and Japan. Malaysia acted in late January, followed by other ASEAN nations. Senegal was the first African country, and by the end of 1972 all global political powerhouses except Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and China had extended the courtesy of official recognition.

Bangladesh joined the Commonwealth of Nations on April 18, 1972. It was the first major global platform that the nation decided

His acumen as a politician made him the undisputed leader of the new nation, and he realised that the bipolar Cold War reality of the world cannot benefit Bangladesh. He understood quite rightly that Bangladesh must remain neutral but embrace the hands extended in friendship.

to be a part of. In a situation when Bangladesh could once again use all the foreign help it could garner, joining the Commonwealth has always been seen as one of our decisive victories in foreign policy.

It may now seem contradictory to the principles of international relations that the nation was hoping to cling to, but even in the first summit attended by Bangladesh, following her entry into the Commonwealth, in Ottawa, Canada in 1973, Bangabandhu

led the Bangladesh delegation and reiterated what this nation stood for when it came to global politics. In his statement, the Bangladesh Prime Minister highlighted the nation’s keen desire to pursue a non-aligned policy, adding that these objectives had been formulated on the basis of our political, economic and socio-cultural aims and interests, keeping in mind the needs of the time. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman expressed the same logical view while addressing the fourth Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit at the Algerian capital, between September 5–9, 1973.

As a young politician, Mujib was quick to realise the dynamics of power and how the poor are taken advantage of. His acumen as a politician made him the undisputed leader of the new nation, and he realised that the bipolar Cold War reality of the world cannot benefit Bangladesh. He understood quite rightly that Bangladesh must remain neutral but embrace the hands extended in friendship, by whoever and whenever. This was the Bengali way, and one the new nation adopted as its foreign policy.

By the beginning of the year 1974, Bangladesh had joined important platforms and made allies among developing nations as well as developed countries. Despite the fact that the matter of the prisoners of war and stranded Bengalis had been resolved, Pakistan had not recognised Bangladesh as a sovereign nation. But that was about to change.

In February 1974, the Summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), most of whose members had already recognised Bangladesh, was scheduled to be held in Lahore. The OIC volunteered to make peace between Pakistan and Bangladesh and sent the then Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Shaikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Sabah to Dhaka. Negotiations continued as Bangabandhu insisted on and ensured mutual recognition of both Bangladesh and Pakistan, instead of only Pakistan recognising Bangladesh. Talks were

fruitful, and the Bangladeshi delegation flew to Lahore.

Ever since September 1972, the country had attempted to become a member of the UN and for three consecutive years, China exercised its veto at the general council to prevent it. Although every failed attempt generated an air of discomfort in foreign relations, the entire experience generated no visible frustration on Bangladesh’s part. The administration of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto took rigorous measures to convince ally states to withhold recognition to Bangladesh; personal requests were made to several heads of states in this regard. At the prospect of Bangladesh gaining membership of the Commonwealth of Nations, Pakistan made a commitment to leave the forum if Bangladesh was indeed conferred membership. It was not until the 90s that Pakistan renewed its membership at the Commonwealth, after leaving it in 1972.

Pakistan also broke off ties with Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Poland as retaliation in the light of formal engagement at the highest level between the countries and Bangladesh. However, the nation had to back away from this belligerent tactic as more and more of its friends were impressed with the new leadership of the state of Bangladesh.

Between December 6, 1971 and August 15, 1975—the day Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was brutally assassinated—the Father of the Nation and a group of young, enthusiastic diplomats ran a campaign that brought one victory upon another in foreign relations. Bangladesh was quick to prove that it was possible, even for a state ravaged by the brutalities of war, and a struggling country trying to make ends meet, to stand with heads held high and achieve what is rightfully theirs—a position to stand along all nations of the world as worthy equals.

Mannan Mashhur Zarif is a Senior Subeditor at The Daily Star.

WHAT'S ON

Group Art Exhibition

Title: Us Women 2020
Venue: EMK Center, Dhanmondi
Date: March 8 – 19
Time: 9:30 am – 7:30 pm

Solo Exhibition

Title: Parables of the Womb
Artist: Dilara Begum Jolly
Venue: Bengal Shipalay, Dhanmondi
Date: February 4 – March 28
Time: 2 pm – 8 pm (Except Sundays)

Solo Photography Exhibition

Title: Joy Bangabandhu
Artist: Nasir Ali Mamun
Date: March 6 – March 24 (Closed on March 13 and 14)
Time: 3 pm to 9 pm (Mon – Thurs); 9 am to 12 noon and 5 pm to 8 pm (Fri-Sat)

Cartoon Exhibition

Title: Shojonghatai Rekha
Venue: Kala Kendra
Date: February 21 – March 17
Time: 4:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Solo Art Exhibition

Title: Serenading Soul
Artist: Zahangir Alom
Venue: Dhaka Gallery, Banani
Date: March 18 – 25
Time: 12 noon – 8 pm



Shotabdir Mohanayok



Itihasheer Mohanayak



Bangabandhu Shorone



Shotoborshe Bangabandhu



Bangabandhu O Bangladesh



Mrityunjoyi Mujib



Bangabandhu Ke Niye Pongtimala



Khoka Theke Bangabandhu

TV specials on Bangabandhu's birth centenary

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

As Bangladesh celebrates Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary and National Children's Day, top television channels of the nation have made some special arrangements. Here is a list of programmes that will be aired on different television channels today.

Initiated by Jatiyo Bastobayon Committee, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy arranged a special performance to commemorate Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary. A 45-minute-long theatrical performance on the life of Bangabandhu, titled, *Shotabdir Mohanayok*, featuring 100

artists will be aired on all channels across the country at 8 pm today. As a part of the celebration, 100 children will sing the national anthem and *Dhono Mujib Dhono*, a song dedicated to the Father of the Nation. 100 musicians will play a musical tribute and 100 singers will perform the theme song of Mujib Borsho.

The show, *Itihasheer Mohanayak*, on the life of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, will be aired at 5:20 pm on BanglaVision. Emceed by Ramendu Majumdar and produced by Rafiqul Islam Farooki, the episode will feature Colonel Mohammed Shawkat Osman, Commander Arif Ahmed Mustafa and Air Commander Mohammed Abu Rahman.

The first episode of the talk show, *Bangabandhu O Bangladesh*, hosted by Lt Col (Retd) Quazi Sajjad Ali and produced by Mamun Abdullah, will be aired at 5:30 pm on Boishakhi Television. Prolific painter Hashem Khan will appear on the show as the special guest.

Channel i has taken an initiative to air several shows throughout the month of March. As part of the celebration, a special programme, *Mrityunjoyi Mujib*, planned by Nasiruddin Yousuff and directed by Jamal Reza, will be aired on the channel at 6: 30 pm. Prolific artist Mustafa Monwar will be seen in the first episode of the show, during which eminent personalities who were political

companions of Bangabandhu will share their memories of him.

Khoka Theke Bangabandhu, a show comprised of 26 episodes, will kick off on Duronto Television from today. On the show, young participants will learn different facts about Bangabandhu's life and the history of Bangladesh. Eminent actor Enamul Haque will appear as the special guest on the first episode of the show, which will air at 5 pm. Other guests of *Khoka Theke Bangabandhu* include Imdadul Haq Milan, Ataur Rahman, Nirmalendu Goon, Nasir Uddin Yousuff, Mamunur Rashid and Ramendu Majumdar among others. Raima Haq and Syed Arbeen Ayan will host the show. After March 17, the

show will air on Fridays and Saturdays at 5 pm, with repeat telecasts at 9 pm.

The talk show, *Shotoborshe Bangabandhu*, produced by Israfeel Shaheen and Babul Akhter, hosted by Soumitra Sekhar, will be aired on ETV at 9: 30 pm. Syed Hasan Imam, Bhaswar Bandyopadhyay and Anima Roy will appear on the show as special guests.

The special poetry recital show, *Bangabandhu Ke Niye Pongtimala*, featuring Ashrafur Alam, Mahidul Islam, Naila Tarannum Kakoli and Masuduzzaman, will air at 6:30 pm on Maasranga Television. The musical programme, *Bangabandhu Shorone*, featuring promising singers Yusuf and Nandita, will be aired at 11:30 pm.



Akram Khan's tribute to Bangabandhu

PHOTO: COLLECTED



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Akram Khan is a British-born Bangladeshi dancer and choreographer, known internationally for classical kathak and contemporary dance. To celebrate the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Akram Khan is currently in Bangladesh

to conduct a special performance.

The 10-minute long performance will feature 30 artists. Choreographed by the dancer himself, the performance will pay a special tribute to the historic speech of March 7, as well as Bangabandhu's life. The performance will air today from 8 pm on all channels across the country.

Coronavirus pandemic hits the film industry hard

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

The Bangladeshi film industry has slowed down, owing to the rapidly spreading coronavirus. Most notably, the shooting schedules of several projects have been postponed and the release dates of many anticipated films have been pushed back over public health concerns. Besides, as single-screens are going out of fashion in Bangladesh, the number of films released every season is also on the decline. As a result, many prolific filmmakers and producers are

thinking twice before putting out their films in theatres at this moment of crisis.

The releases of *Shoshurbari Jindabad 2*, directed by Debashish Biswas and Sujan Barua directorial *Bandhob* have been postponed. Both these films were supposed to hit cinemas on March 20. "Prioritising public health over everything else, we have taken the decision," explained Debashish. Gazi Rakayet, the lead actor in *Bandhob*, said that the new release date of their film will be announced soon.

Masud Hasan Ujjal's *Unoponchash Batash*,

which was set to hit cinemas on March 13, has also been pushed back. However, as of now, Chayanika Chowdhury's *Bishwo Shundori*, is set to release on March 27 in 60 theatres. Shahriar Nazim Joy has also postponed the release of his directorial debut *Amar Maa*, from March 20 to April 10. "We are running out of business for a long time. Now, as the coronavirus has turned into a major public health concern, we are afraid to launch new films in theatres," asserts Iftekharuddin Naushad, owner of Modhumita.

With the slogan, 'Be bold for change', Hotel Sarina celebrated International Women's Day 2020. Founder and Managing Director of Basha Boutique Robin Jeyffert, artiste and advocate Peiya Jannatul, Founder and Creative Director of Motif Jackie Corlett, Founder of Hashimukh, Nusrat Akter, Superintendent of Seabreeze International School, along with Samiha Zaman, CEO of Protibha, Maisha Lubaba, and HR Officer, Admin & Logistics of Tearfund Josephine Alexander attended the programme.



PHOTO: COURTESY

সর্বকালের সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙালি জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু
শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের জন্মশতবার্ষিকীতে
বিনম্র শ্রদ্ধাঞ্জলি

মুজিব বর্ষে নিজস্ব বিনিয়োগ ব্যতীত
একতলা বাড়ি নির্মাণে গ্রহণ করুন
বিএইচবিএফসি'র 'জিরো ইকুইটি আবাসন' ঋণ

বাংলাদেশ হাউস বিল্ডিং ফাইন্যান্স কর্পোরেশন
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Shekar Theke Shikhore, a monument with a 26-foot-tall sculpture of Bangabandhu, on the premises of Dhobakhola Coronation High School at Natiabari in Pabna's Bera upazila.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

NAGARBARI AND ‘MUJIB BANDH’

Pabna people’s fond memory of Bangabandhu

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, back from Nagarbari

As the nation observes the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the people of Pabna feel nostalgic because of his association with Nagarbari ferry terminal and ‘Mujib Bandh’, a flood control embankment along Padma and Jamuna rivers.

Shekar Theke Shikhore, a large monument with a 26-foot-tall sculpture of Bangabandhu, was inaugurated on February 2 in 2018, on the premises of Dhobakhola Coronation High School in Bera upazila’s Natiabari, six kilometres from Nagarbari ferry terminal.

A brief history of Bangladesh from the battle of Polashi to the 1971 Liberation War have been depicted in plaques set beside the monument.

Former lawmaker of Pabna-2 constituency Khandaker Azizul Haque Arzu contributed to making the monument.

“We demand establishing a museum here, so that locals as well as visitors from different areas can learn better about Bangabandhu,” said freedom fighter Fazlu Master.

There are also demands for taking initiative to keep alive the memory of Bangabandhu at other places associated with Bangabandhu.

On February 26 in 1972, Bangabandhu, then prime minister of independent Bangladesh, himself carried a pot of soil and put it at Bashantapur point of Nagarbari in Pabna’s Bera upazila, marking inauguration of the construction of a flood protection embankment on the Padma and the Jamuna rivers.

Locals named the 157.5-kilometre-long embankment ‘Mujib Bandh’, in fond memory of Bangabandhu.

“Once flooding by Padma and Jamuna rivers caused

damage to crops in vast areas of Pabna every monsoon. Before the 1970 elections, Bangabandhu pledged to make a flood control embankment on the two mighty rivers,” said Abdul Kader, chairman of Bera upazila parishad, also a witness of the day.

After the independence in 1972, Bangabandhu inaugurated construction of the embankment at Nagarbari, himself putting soil at Bashantapur point. Inspired by Bangabandhu, locals worked together to construct the huge embankment, which helps the farmers in Pabna to get crops three times a year,” he added.

“Nagarbari was the lone gateway of the northern districts in 60s and 70s. Bangabandhu travelled several times in Pabna and other northern districts for his political activities through Nagarbari ferry terminal. He held a rally for the historic Six-point demand in 1966 at Nagarbari ghat on his way to northern districts,” said Md Rafique Ullah, chairman of Puran Varanga union parishad in Pabna’s Bera upazila.

“Now there is no trace of the ferry terminal as the river changed its course. Most of the people of that time also passed away,” he said.

“Bangabandhu came to Pabna in 1948, 1952, 1954, 1964, 1966, and 1970 and addressed rallies at different places including Nagarbari, Pabna Town Hall and Ishwardi upazila to motivate people for joining movements for realising their rights,” said Dr Anwarul Islam, pro-vice chancellor of Pabna University of Science and Technology, also a researcher on Bangabandhu.

“After independence, he visited many places in Pabna in connection with important public affairs. It is our duty to preserve Bangabandhu’s memory at the institutional level for the future generation,” he said.



Police press charges

FROM PAGE 14

the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate’s Court of Dhaka.

The IO also brought charges of assaulting and snatching of her mobile phone, wristwatch, and money.

According to the charge sheet, 16 people were made prosecution witnesses in the case, and 20 pieces of evidence were seized from different places, including the spot.

The IO said the accused matched the description the victim gave and “the biological evidence” reserved at the one-stop crisis centre of Dhaka Medical College Hospital also matched with the accused.

“The International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number of the lost mobile phone provided

by the victim also matched with the IMEI number of the phone recovered from the accused’s possession,” the IO mentioned.

The second-year student was raped and tortured while she was walking from Kurmitola bus stop to a friend’s house around 7:30pm on January 5.

After regaining consciousness around 10:00pm, she managed to make it to her friend’s house in Shewra. Later, her friend took her to DMCH around midnight.

The next day, the victim’s father filed a case with Cantonment Police Station accusing unknown people in this regard.

Rab on January 8 arrested 30-year-old Majnu from Shewra area and said he was a serial rapist and that he tried

to kill the DU student after raping her.

He was later placed on a seven-day remand.

On January 16, Majnu confessed that he committed the crime.

He told the magistrate that he was lying in wait for a victim that day. When he saw the girl walking from Kurmitola bus stop, he grabbed her from behind, gagged her, and took her to an isolated place nearby.

“I beat her up and raped her. But she was still able to escape,” Majnu said in his confessional statement, adding that he tried to strangle her and at one stage, she lost consciousness.

After rape, he took her watch, money, and mobile phone.

The rape incident sparked a firestorm of protests and condemnations across the country.

Biman slashes

FROM PAGE 14

Mafidur Rahman, told this correspondent that CAAB used to earn about Tk 3 crore a day from HSA but now it earns about Tk 1 crore.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines in its latest decision suspended flights to Muscat after the government of Oman decided not to allow any Bangladeshi in due to the Covid-19 outbreak, said Tahera Khandaker, the carrier’s deputy general manager of public relations.

Earlier, Biman suspend flights to Dammam, Madina, Jeddah, Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, Kolkata and New Delhi in India, and Kuwait, Qatar and Kathmandu as the governments there decided to ban travel from Dhaka, added Tahera.

The national carrier is now operating flights to London, Manchester, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Bangkok. But flights to even these destinations have dropped.

Biman now flies to Kuala Lumpur 12 times a week instead of the usual 20, to Singapore five times instead of 14, and to Bangkok four times instead of 14, Biman sources said.

The carrier incurred a Tk 270 crore loss since February, said a top official of Biman.

Tahera said between February 28 to March 28, Biman was scheduled

to operate 914 international flights and carry 2,21,574 passengers. But the carrier could operate 584 flights and carry 1,22,963 passengers at best.

M Mohibul Haque, senior secretary at the civil aviation ministry, told The Daily Star that Biman is heading towards a serious financial crisis.

Apart from incurring losses due to suspension of flights, the national carrier was also losing money as it was carrying less freight and was earning a lot less from ground handling, Mohibul said.

If the situation does not improve in the coming months, Biman will be in difficulty to pay its 4,500 employees, of whom 3,329 are permanent, Biman officials said.

The airlines may have to seek financial assistance from the government, he said.

He also said unlike organisations of other sectors, Biman would not be able to recover the losses with extra effort and that was why the carrier is now trying to cut costs.

Global aviation industry may lose \$113 billion in sales if the coronavirus continues to spread, according to the International Air Transport Association.

Just three weeks ago, the IATA had been expecting lost sales in the range

of \$30 billion.

Airlines in Europe and Asia would bear the brunt of the pain, according to the IATA.

KSA detains

FROM PAGE 14

winding down that campaign after 15 months, but the authorities later said they would start going after graft by ordinary government employees.

An anti-corruption body known as Nazaha tweeted late on Sunday that it had arrested and would indict 298 people on crimes such as bribery, embezzlement, and abuse of power involving a total of 379 million riyals (\$101 million).

Among those implicated are eight defence ministry officers suspected of bribery and money laundering in relation to government contracts during the years 2005-2015, and 29 interior ministry officials in the Eastern Province, including three colonels, a major general and a brigadier general.

Two judges were also detained for receiving bribes, along with nine officials accused of corruption at Riyadh’s Almaarefa University which resulted in severe damage to a building and caused deaths and injuries, Nazaha said.

Kurigram DC, 3 other officials

FROM PAGE 1

A circular in this regard, signed by Senior Assistant Secretary AM Al Amin, was received by Kurigram Deputy Commissioner’s officer around 11:00am, reported our Lalmonirhat correspondent, quoting officials.

The three were attached to the public administration ministry, the circular read.

They were allegedly involved in torturing the journalist -- Ariful Islam, a correspondent of Bangla Tribune.

Early Saturday, a mobile court of Kurigram district administration, led by the three assistant commissioners, sentenced Ariful to one-year imprisonment after he was arrested from his home on charges of possessing narcotics.

After the arrest, Ariful’s family members claimed he was innocent and that he was being falsely implicated as he wrote against alleged corruption by the district administration, including DC Sultana.

Ariful was released on bail the next day.

After his release, the journalist alleged the raid on his home was

conducted at the DC’s instruction.

“You will be put in a crossfire. Your time is up. Recite the kalima. I thought they were taking me somewhere to kill me...”

These were the words of Ariful as he described being held and tortured allegedly by Senior Assistant Commissioner Nazim Uddin.

Senior Consultant (orthopaedic) Uttam Kumar Roy of Kurigram General Hospital said Ariful’s body bore multiple injury marks.

The incident was widely reported in the media, sparking outrage, especially among the journalist community.

Meanwhile, replying to a query, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said they were yet to receive any written complaint against an official of the Department of Narcotics Control over his alleged involvement in falsely implicating the journalist.

He, however, said the DNC was working to this end and would take action if the official was found guilty following an investigation.

“Law is equal for all,” he told reporters at his ministry office.

HC ASKS FOR RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

In another development, the High Court yesterday ordered the state to submit all the relevant documents over the conviction and sentencing of journalist Ariful Islam by a mobile court, reports BSS.

A High Court vacation bench comprising Justice Md Ashrafur Kamal and Justice Sardar Md Rashed Jahangir passed the order after holding hearing on a writ petition filed in this regard.

The court asked the state to submit the documents by March 23 and also asked the prosecution to inform it about the steps taken by the public administration ministry over the matter.

Senior lawyer AM Amin Uddin and Ishrat Hasan moved the writ before the court, while Deputy Attorney General Debashish Biswas appeared for the state.

The High Court on Sunday had sought a copy of the mobile court order and the list of people who were part of the mobile court raid, says BSS report.

Bangla Tribune Executive Editor Harun ur Rashid had filed the writ the same day.

Bangabandhu’s first birthday

FROM PAGE 1

supplements, carry special articles and features on the life and activities of Bangabandhu. Bangladesh Television telecasts an interview of Bangabandhu’s parents on this special occasion.

When Bangabandhu was in prison in Pakistan, his colleagues in Bangladesh government had declared this day a public holiday. But Bangabandhu in a statement says that he doesn’t think March 17 should be a holiday in the future. He however adds that March 17 this year shall be observed as a public holiday as a token of love and admiration for the great prime minister of India, Sreemati Indira Gandhi.

INDIRA GANDHI ARRIVES

Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi today flies into Dhaka to a hearty welcome carrying messages of goodwill and friendship of the people

of India for the friendly people of Bangladesh.

As her special twin-jet Rajhangshah rolls into the tarmac, loud applause welcomes the great friend of Bangladesh. Waiting to receive her were Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Begum Fazilatunnesa and their youngest son Russel, among others.

Addressing the biggest ever public meeting in Dhaka at the Suhrawardy Uddyan a few hours after her arrival, Indira Gandhi says that people of Bangladesh and India will be one in sharing the burden of humanity’s sufferings. They will together also continue the march in shaping their destinies and that both will live as good and friendly neighbours. “Our friendship and unity are based on an unshakable foundation,” she adds.

Bangabandhu in his speech at the programme declares that Bangladesh,

realised at a very high cost in terms of life and blood, believes in peaceful co-existence and malice to none. The entire Suhrawardy Uddyan shook to its depths with the full-throated affirmation from the mammoth gathering when Bangabandhu asks whether they support the Bangladesh-India friendship and are ready to take up arms to protect their freedom, which had been achieved through great sacrifice.

Representatives from the Bangladesh and Indian governments hold substantive talks at four levels during which various subjects, including trade relations, flood control, travel facilities, war crimes trial and the international situation in the subcontinent are discussed.

SOURCES: March 18, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, The Daily Ittefaq, Azad, Morning News, The Bangladesh Observer and Purbodesh.

Rise in dengue cases rings alarm

FROM PAGE 1

He said they are seeing a high density of Aedes larvae at various wards of both city corporations -- indicating an alarming picture ahead of the dengue season.

On an average, the Breteau Index is now 10 to 12, whereas it was less than 10 last year around this time, said Kabirul.

The Breteau Index measures the number of positive containers per 100 houses inspected.

The authorities concerned will have to take advance steps right now to destroy breeding sources of Aedes mosquitoes to avert a situation like last year’s, he said.

“Mobilising people and involving them in cleaning activities is very important to control the breeding Aedes mosquitoes.”

Organisations like the Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) will have to ensure their members take necessary steps to destroy all breeding sources at their sites and do not give any scope for mosquitoes to breed, said Kabirul.

City corporations will also have to work against Aedes mosquitoes throughout the year, he added.

Entomologist Dr Manzur Chowdhury, former president of the Geological Society of Bangladesh, concurred that the number of dengue patients this year can be significant if authorities concerned do not take steps

to destroy breeding sites right away.

This is the right time to take all necessary measures as the spread of Aedes is still at a lower scale. But it will become tough to control when it spreads further during the rainy season, he warned.

The four-fold increase in the number of hospitalised dengue patients is an ominous sign, added Manzur.

DNCC Panel Mayor Jamal Mostafa said they are taking various measures, such as larviciding, adultciding, and applying malaria oil-B, as well as cleaning waterbodies to destroy mosquito breeding grounds.

He further said that from March 7 onwards, the DNCC has been monitoring mosquito-control activities by engaging 11 teams in a bid to curb both Culex and Aedes mosquitoes.

The teams have been monitoring mosquito-control activities in every ward and they will submit reports to the authorities concerned in this regard, added Jamal.

DNCC Health Officer Dr Md Emdadul Haque said they have been undertaking mosquito-control activities all year round.

“We also took necessary steps to destroy sources of Aedes mosquitoes after getting DGHS’s survey report.”

Apart from these, the DNCC is also taking various steps to raise awareness in this regard and holding advocacy meetings in all zones under its jurisdiction, he said.

The DNCC has also issued letters to various government and private organisations, such as REHAB, to take the necessary steps to destroy breeding sources on their premises, added Emdadul.

DSCC Chief Health Officer Brig Gen Sharif Ahmed said they are taking measures throughout the year to control Aedes mosquitoes as well as taking steps to address Culex mosquitoes when they breed between November and March/April.

Sharif said they have been continuing anti-mosquito drives and are trying hard to control the mosquito menace.

Another DSCC official said they conducted a crash programme to destroy Aedes mosquito hotspots following the DGHS survey.

Mayor Sayeed Khokon inaugurated a seven-day programme to begin on March 25 to destroy Aedes mosquito breeding sources identified by DGHS, said this official.

The DSCC also issued letters to various organisations like Rajuk, REHAB, DMP, WASA and BWDB to take necessary steps to destroy mosquito breeding grounds.

REHAB president Alamgir Shamsul Alamin said they have already issued letters to all of their members twice to take necessary steps to clean still or stagnant water and to undertake cleaning activities at their construction sites or project areas.

Three more infected

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh Institute of Tropical and Infectious Diseases in Chattogram, and one facility in Cox’s Bazar would soon be equipped to test people for coronavirus. The tests are currently done only at the Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research in the capital.

DGHS officials yesterday said they did not test as many people as they would like because they had been concerned about running out of testing kits and made “rational” use of available resources.

Contacted, Prof Azad said more kits sent by WHO would arrive from Dubai in two or three days. “We will then try to find out the actual number of patients in the country.”

Many officials said they fear that people who returned from affected countries may have infected others by not quarantining themselves properly.

Prof Azad held a meeting with WHO country representative to Bangladesh Dr Bardan Jung Rana at the DGHS office in the capital yesterday.

Dr Rana promised that WHO would assist Bangladesh in getting more kits and personal protective equipment (PPE) from China, Prof Azad said.

IN DARKNESS, AT RISK

Of the eight people tested positive, the first three have fully recovered, IEDCR Director Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora told reporters yesterday.

The IEDCR have so far tested a total

of 241 people. Prof Flora yesterday said the number of tests done was enough to get the actual picture.

WHAT EXPERTS SAY

Contacted, Prof Saif Ullah Munshi, chairman of virology department at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, said, “Testing 241 people is not enough to get the real picture. There is a need to routinely and randomly test people from different communities.”

Prof Muzaherul Huq, former regional advisor of WHO’s South East Asia region, said, “What happened in China, South Korea and other countries is an indication that there are 10-15 times more patients than reported.”

“The government should take more drastic measures. We need strict monitoring to ensure proper quarantine. There should be arrangements to treat people at facilities and Intensive Care Units should be prepared. But our healthcare system is not ready for this. Even the most developed countries have not been able to do this. The only way is to lock down the whole country for some time.”

ARRIVALS DESPITE TRAVEL BAN

With 304 Bangladeshis, including the 95 from Italy and other European countries, a plane of Qatar Airlines arrived at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 6:48pm,

officials said.

The 95 were taken to Ashkona Hajj Camp in the city’s Uttara for health screening. The authorities will later decide whether to quarantine them at a facility or allow them to go home.

Sixty-eight of them came from Italy, Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman, chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh, told The Daily Star.

The rest of the 209 passengers are from Qatar. They were allowed to go home and asked to be in self-quarantine at home for 14 days, said Dr Jahirul Islam, physician at the health desk of the airport.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen on Saturday said no one from Europe, except the UK, would be allowed to enter Bangladesh.

He also said all on-arrival visas would remain suspended for two weeks.

Asked about last night’s arrival, a CAAB official said Qatar Airways managed Bangladesh government’s permission through diplomatic means.

Other CAAB officials said the government gave the permission on humanitarian grounds.

CAAB chief Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman said he will issue a letter to Qatar Airways expressing his disappointment.

“We have verbally expressed our dissatisfaction to the country manager of Qatar Airways and he pledged not to repeat this,” he said.

LAW OPINION

THE HAZARDS OF (EXTENSIVE) TRIAL BY BUREAUCRATS

MD. RIZWANUL ISLAM

THE recent apparently appalling arrest of Dhaka Tribune journalist, Mr Ariful Islam has been the talk of the town. There is yet to be a judicial or some other form of independent assessment of what actually transpired. However, the palpable urgency and heavy-handed manner in which the public servants seem to have acted for dealing with an offence which is by no means a grave one along with the chain of events would unmistakably convey a presumption of ulterior motives. This incident vividly demonstrates some of the demons of the Mobile Court Act, 2009 (MCA). One can only hope that the publicity the incident has garnered may give an impetus to a much-needed overhaul of this law which is hardly attuned with the values of a democratic society.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

In essence, the executive magistrates are bureaucrats and *not* judges. This is a core policy reason that they are supposed to be vested with the jurisdiction to try those matters which are rather straightforward and do not need the exercise of a judicial mind. However, the MCA in its current shape includes around hundred offences which may be tried by mobile courts which are operated by judicial executive magistrates. And while operating mobile courts, they are not only exercising some judicial powers but are also the informants and witnesses, and this can

seriously tilt the balance against the accused.

Arguably, even the Preamble of the Act has envisaged that the power of the mobile court would be ‘limited’ to impose ‘limited punishment’. Section 7 of the MCA also seeks to limit the power of the court by providing that if an accused person does not accept her/his guilt, the mobile court would not be competent to sentence her/him and would refer the matter to a court of competent jurisdiction for trial. However, rather strikingly, the law does not provide a safeguard that an accused person be advised that her/his acceptance of guilt would lead to a conviction and a non-acceptance would give her/him an option to undergo a full-blown trial in the court of law. In a country like ours where bureaucrats are the epitomes of power, it is possible that even some people would feel coerced to accept the guilt of committing imaginary crimes lest greater trouble befalls on them. Again, any conviction by the mobile court, no matter how simple the punishment may be, is still a conviction. Convictions would remain as a stigma in a society like ours, where public memory of people’s misdeeds are seemingly much stronger than public memory of people’s great achievements.

It has to be acknowledged that applied in strictly pressing situations involving straightforward matters, with well-defined rules for the application of the MCA, it can play an important role in reducing the backlog of cases in our criminal courts. As long as the mobile courts do engage in routine matters such as visit examination halls during public examinations, inspect retail stores in broad daylight, or swiftly acts to prevent impending child marriage, the potential for abuse of the MCA is minimal. Breaking in people’s door at night to recover a small number of narcotics should never be the function of mobile courts. After all, skies would not have fallen if the recovery push awaited the light of the morning sun. This is where not only the scope of the jurisdiction of the mobile court but also in what circumstances the jurisdiction can be exercised should be spelt out in clearer terms.

The public’s simple perception of justice and a seemingly insatiable appetite for swift justice, even if that is raw justice, seem to have created

a mirage that mobile courts are meeting out justice. And in many cases, mobile courts are possibly doing just that. However, members of the public can only see the well-circulated media reports of the operation of the mobile courts, but not how the operation actually went and the kind of evidence this ‘self-sufficient’ mobile court actually relied upon. Indeed, if we note that in *Mohammad Shahjahan Khan v Executive Magistrate, Munshigonj and Ors*, the High Court Division (HCD) has asked the Cabinet Secretary that a circular stating that ‘while exercising powers under the Mobile Court Act, 2009 and the relevant laws they (executive magistrates) must not exceed their lawful authority’, [LEX/BDHC/0236/2015] it is patent that the HCD either felt that there was a pattern of gross abuse of powers or the potential for it. And from a public policy point of view, there seems to be no appreciable reason for the MCA to be run by judicial magistrates who are trained in law and are not the under control of bureaucrats. It seems disingenuous to claim that justice or public policy dictates that mobile court be run by executive magistrates. The oft-cited number of judicial magistrates in itself is simply unacceptable as it can be addressed readily by appointing more judicial magistrates.

Assuming that Mr Islam was not a journalist affiliated with a national newspaper, but still cantankerous or unlucky enough to have incensed bureaucrats, one can easily imagine that the incident could have remained beyond the gaze of the public. Indeed, the travails of Mr Islam speaks loud how much easier a prey a commoner could have been. Had that been the case, he would not have been lucky enough to be granted bail so soon. To put it bluntly, the administration of justice in the hands of bureaucrats, some of whom are termed as ‘district administrators’ (literal translation of the Bengali equivalent which is in common currency), is a perilous venture, and it should be vested in them in the rarest of rare cases when there are compelling public reasons necessitating immediate action. And it is not befitting the vision of the founding father of the Republic who viewed bureaucrats as *public servants*.

THE WRITER IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT DEPARTMENT OF LAW, NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

International Day of Action for Rivers



MARCH 14 is observed annually as the International Day of Action for Rivers. This observance was initiated in 1998 by International Rivers, an ecological organisation located in California, USA. The participants of the first International Meeting of People Affected by Dams adopted this initiative in March 1997.

International Day of Action for Rivers aims to raise public awareness of destructive water development projects, health and sustainable management of the watersheds. This year’s Day of Action for Rivers theme focuses on “Women, Water, and Climate Change”. Last year, 100 women from 32 countries who are leading efforts to protect and defend rivers gathered at the first ever Women and Rivers Congress. The Congress aimed to celebrate the fundamental role women play in defending and stewarding freshwater resources, and to initiate collective action challenging the gender inequities women face in safeguarding rivers and river ecosystems.

COMPILED BY LAW DESK (SOURCE: INTERNATIONALRIVERS.ORG).

PEOPLE’S VOICE

Law reports should be free

NAFIZ AHMED

THE principle “*ignorantia juris non excusat*” is embedded in almost all the major legal systems, which roughly translates to “ignorance of the law is no excuse.” Simply put, the citizens of the state must be aware of all the laws of the state and in case of breach of a law, can never put forward the defense that they were not aware of the law. Since an obligation is put on the citizens of a nation because of this principle, certain rights are also granted to successfully and conveniently fulfill this obligation. For example, it is a duty of the states to make the laws accessible to their citizens.

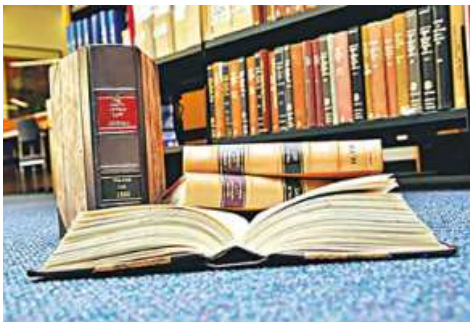
In Bangladesh, such right is granted through the adoption of the Bangladesh Laws (Revision and Declaration) Act 1973 (BLRDA 1973) and the Right to Information Act 2009 (RTIA 2009). The BLRDA 1973, through its section 6, requires the government to publish all the Acts of the Parliament, Ordinances and President’s Orders and section 6A requires these to be published on a website. Section 6 of the RTIA 2009 requires an “authority” to annually publish its decisions, activities and proposed activities in a manner that can easily be accessed by the citizens. For the purpose of the RTIA 2009, an “authority” includes all constitutional bodies.

Article 111 of the Constitution gives a binding effect to the decisions of the Supreme Court (SC) of Bangladesh. It makes the law declared by the Appellate Division (AD) of the SC binding on the High Court Division (HCD) of the SC and the subordinate courts and the law declared by the HCD binding upon the subordinate courts. So, the judgments of the SC serve as binding laws in the national courts. Under article 111 of the Constitution, only the *ratio decidendi* is binding law, not the *obiter dictum* [as confirmed by the AD in the *Moudud Ahmed and Ors. v The State and Ors.* (2016) case reported in 36 BLD (AD) 33]. In the said case it was observed by the AD that “*Ratio decidendi* is the principle found out upon a reading of the judgment as a whole in the light of issues raised before the court and not particular words or sentences of the judgment” and to put it simply, *obiter dictum* is the observation made by the court in a judgment which is not necessary for determining the case. Although not binding, *obiter dictum* is worthy of respect and carries a significant weight in court.

Court proceedings of countries following common law legal tradition are heavily dependent upon precedents set by the superior courts as they all follow the maxim *stare decisis et non quia movere*, meaning to abide by the precedents and not to disturb settled points. This is incredibly important in maintaining stability in adjudication and providing a safe standard for experts advising the lay persons. The citizens must, therefore, regulate their activities in line with

these binding precedents.

But how do we get access to these precedents? Law reports publish these judgments in their monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and annual publications. If you are unfamiliar with law reports, they are the fancily bound massive books you see in law firms and lawyers’ chambers. There are several law reports in Bangladesh and getting your hands on all the reports will cost you millions. It will be unreasonable to expect that the public in general will have access to these law reports as not even all lawyers have access to these. Only the wealthiest law firms can afford to buy all the law reports available in the market. This renders the obligation of citizens to know all laws next to impossible. Additionally, it is safe to say that only the wealthiest of the citizens can afford to consult a well-resourced law firm. So, citizens with low income, who cannot employ a well-resourced law firm to represent them are deprived of proper representation. It is also important to know that not all judgments get reported as the editors of these law reports decide which judgments will be published. Thus, they hold the power to deprive the citizens of knowing all relevant *ratio decidendi*, or worse, withhold wide dissemination of those which are not palatable to them thus limiting our access to relevant laws.



Under the RTIA 2009, the SC is also an “authority” as it is a constitutional body established under article 94 of the Constitution. Therefore, the people of Bangladesh seem to possess the right to know all decisions taken by it under section 6 of the RTIA. Some judgments are published on the SC’s website, but they are extremely limited. Expecting the citizens to buy the law reports in order to be aware of the SC judgments is unfair, to say the least. The judgments are drafted in electronic copies in the SC so it can easily be published on their website. One cannot help but wonder, in a digital era, how the citizens of Bangladesh are being denied free access to these laws which should ideally be one click away! This endeavour should fit right in with the government’s promise to create a digital Bangladesh with a digital judiciary.

THE WRITER IS A RESEARCH ASSOCIATE AT A LAW FIRM IN DHAKA.

LAW ANALYSIS

Main features of the Deposit Protection Bill 2020

REPEALING the Bank Deposit Insurance Ordinance 1984 with certain modifications, the Bank Deposit Insurance Act, 2000 was enacted. Recently in February, 2020, a new law titled as the “Deposit Protection Bill” has been proposed in order to repeal as well as reenact the 2000 Act and to bring modifications thereto.

According to section 3 of the proposed law, Bangladesh Bank (BB) shall reserve a fund called Deposit Insurance Trust Fund (DITF) and the money of this fund shall be invested in any sector sanctioned by the BB. The following type of money shall be deposited to the fund - (a) money received from insured banks as well as financial institutions; (b) income received from the bank wound up under section 7; (c) money received from the investment of money from the fund; and (d) money received from other sources. According to sub-section 3 of section 3, the fund shall not be spent out except for payment of debt to the depositor creditor of the bank wound up under section 7 and for maintenance of this fund. Sub-section 4 provides that nothing of the Income Tax Ordinance shall be applicable to the income of this fund. Section 3 of the newly proposed law is identical to that of the previous Act of 2000 except for sub-section 5 thereto. Sub-section 5 says that no criminal proceeding shall be started against any authorised person for acts done in good faith under this law or any rules made thereunder.

Section 4 says that notwithstanding anything contained in any other law, all scheduled banks and financial institutions shall be considered to be insured from the date of the commencement of this law. And moreover, all scheduled banks and financial institutions established after the enactment of this law, shall be insured with the fund under this law.

There is a change sought to be brought through the proposed law in terms of premium of the insured banks and financial institutions. Section 5 of the Act of 2000 provided that every insured bank shall pay fund premium every year from that part of its deposit at the rate of 7 paise per-cent which shall be determined by the BB from time to time. Section 5 of the proposed law says that every insured bank and financial institution shall pay fund premium on such part of the deposited amount and at such rate as may be determined by the BB from time to time. Both the laws provided that BB may with the authority from the government change the rate of the premium.

Sub-sections 2, 3 and 4 of section 5 are almost identical to those of the previous Act. They say that the insured



banks and financial institutions shall pay their premium from their expenditure; premium shall be paid in the time and manner as specified by the BB; if any insured bank fails to pay premium, the BB shall be able to order that premium be paid from the account of such insured bank and financial institution reserved by BB (by deducting an amount equal to that of the payable premium).

Section 6 of the proposed law provides that if an insured bank or financial institution fails to pay premium, then BB may order deduction of an amount from the account maintained by BB of such insured bank or financial institution equal to the premium, as premium. It further says that if an insured bank or financial institution fails to pay premium for two consecutive times, BB may order such bank or institution not to accept deposits for such time as may be in the notification of the official gazette, upon providing them the chance to be heard. The previous Act envisioned this consequence in case the insured bank failed to pay premium more than once. Section 6 of the proposed law further says that in case of failure of paying premium for two or more times, the Trustee Board may advise BB to take initiatives for the winding up of the respective institution.

Section 7 speaks about the liability of the fund. If any order of winding up of an insured bank or financial institution is given, every depositor of such bank shall be paid an amount equal to his

deposit by the BB, which shall in no case be more than one lakh taka. Sub-section 2 says that even if a depositor maintains more than one account and the sum of such account(s) is more than one lakh taka, he shall not be paid up from the fund exceeding one lakh taka or exceeding such amount as may be determined by the BB upon prior approval of the Government. There is a subtle difference between section 7 of the newly proposed law and that of the previous Act. The Act of 2000 provided that in all cases, the upper limit of payable amount shall be one lakh taka. However, the draft law says that with the prior approval of the Government, BB may also determine the payable amount differently. Section 7 also states that such paid up amount shall be adjusted with the amount paid to the depositor from its fund by the liquidator against the net asset of the bank. Sub-section 3 of section 7 says that the liquidator of any wound-up insured bank or financial institution, shall submit and send list of depositors in the form specified by the BB within 90 days after receiving office. Sub-section 4 says that as per provision of sub-section 3 after receiving the list of depositors the trustee board shall take initiatives to pay the payable amount to the depositors from the fund.

Section 8 provides that for the maintenance and management of the fund, there shall be a Trustee Board and the Board of Directors of the BB shall be the Trustee Board of the fund.

FROM LAW DESK.

Gatherings of over 50 banned in Delhi

NDTV ONLINE

Night-clubs, gyms and spas will be shut in Delhi till March 31 over coronavirus, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal declared yesterday announcing a new set of bans to limit the spread of the highly contagious disease. He also urged the people of Delhi to postpone weddings and other functions.

"All religious, social, cultural gatherings with more than 50 people have been banned," said Arvind Kejriwal. The ban would not apply to weddings, said the Chief Minister, asking people to avoid them voluntarily.

Weekly bazaars have been suspended. Three hotels have been identified for people to pay and use for quarantine, he said.

The total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases across India is 116, with maximum cases recorded in Maharashtra (37). The only other death has been reported in Karnataka.



A member of a non-governmental organisation puts a face mask on a man as a precaution against the spread of coronavirus, at a traffic junction in Ahmedabad, India yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Bahrain records first death in GCC

A Bahraini woman has died from the novel coronavirus, the health ministry announced yesterday, marking the first death from the disease among Gulf Co-operation Council states. The 65-year-old woman had pre-existing medical conditions, the ministry said on Twitter. Nearly 1,000 cases of the virus have been recorded so far across the six nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Most of those infected have been people returning from Iran, where more than 700 people had died in the outbreak by Sunday. Facing a mounting public health threat, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman have taken drastic measures to combat the pandemic. The Gulf countries have shut down cinemas and other entertainment centres -- some even closing gyms and spas. Kuwait has taken the strictest measures in the GCC by largely locking down the country over the weekend.

US Navy reports first suspected case on ship

The US Navy reported its first suspected case of the new coronavirus aboard a ship, saying a sailor had tested positive for the disease but the result needed to be confirmed by health authorities. It came a week after another US Navy sailor stationed in southern Italy contracted COVID-19, which has killed more than 3,700 people worldwide including nearly 70 in the United States. "A Sailor assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4) tested 'presumptive positive' for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), marking the first case for a sailor aboard a Navy ship," the Navy said in a statement on Sunday evening. The sailor was in quarantine at home, it said, adding that "personnel that the individual immediately identified having close contact with have been notified and are in self-isolation at their residences." The Navy said that the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would need to confirm the positive result.



Wuhan doctors celebrate closure of last hospital

Hospital staff in the Chinese city where the coronavirus originated removed their masks ceremoniously as the country's last emergency hospital, built to handle the crisis, was closed. In a video that has been viewed millions of times online, workers remove their masks one by one as the camera passes them, to mark the moment. China built 14 new hospitals, including two in Wuhan, early last month in just weeks to provide thousands of beds for the sick as the virus spread rapidly. The country has recorded 80,824 cases of coronavirus and 3,189 deaths since the start of the outbreak at the end of last year. But strict quarantine measures appear to have drastically reduced the number of new cases, and the country has eased up on the measures in its hardest hit region. On Saturday health chiefs said there had been 13 new deaths and just 11 new cases, including people who recently arrived from other affected countries. More than 65,000 people have recovered from the disease in China.

SOURCE: AFP, INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

US ramps up virus response

New York, Los Angeles order schools, restaurants, theatres to close; Federal Reserve slashes rates to stem fallout

AFP, Washington

Nightlife capitals New York and Los Angeles yesterday ordered schools, bars and restaurants to close or go take-out only as the US scrambled to contain the coronavirus pandemic and the Federal Reserve slashed rates to stem the fallout.

The fast-spreading outbreak has claimed almost 70 lives in the United States, disrupting every walk of life as Americans panic-buy essentials and brace for what may come.

Faced with an economic slowdown, the Fed announced emergency measures to shore up confidence and keep the financial sector running, including cutting the key interest rate to 0-0.25 percent.

President Donald Trump, in a now-daily briefing to his virus task force, praised the Fed's "phenomenal" action and sought to strike a reassuring tone even as he pleaded with Americans to stop stripping store shelves bare.

"Relax. We're doing great. It all will pass," he said.

But Anthony Fauci, the country's leading expert on infectious diseases, was blunt in telling Americans to prepare for hard times.

"The worst is ahead for us," he told the briefing. "We have a very, very critical point now."

In drastic measures, New York's Mayor Bill de Blasio said the city's usually buzzing bars and restaurants would

be restricted to take-out or delivery, and that nightclubs, theaters and concert venues must close starting today.

Schools, museums and sports arenas have already been shut in many US states -- but lively St Patrick's Day celebrations were still held despite pleas to limit socializing, prompting calls for more aggressive action.

"Our city is facing an unprecedented threat, and we must respond with a wartime mentality," De Blasio said in a statement.

Reinforcing the message, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended that gatherings of 50 people or more be cancelled or postponed, not including day-to-day education or business activities.

In the strongest measure yet on American soil, the US territory of Puerto Rico imposed a 9:00pm to 5:00am curfew -- along with the closure of malls, movie theaters, gyms and bars.

As a number of states imposed shutdowns, the governor of Illinois, which includes the city of Chicago, announced that all bars and restaurants would close until March 30.

Los Angeles also said it would close bars, restaurants and nightclubs for at least two weeks, while California's Governor Gavin Newsom asked people over the age of 65 to self-isolate.

Several major Las Vegas casinos and hotels were shuttered, and party town New Orleans issued guidelines halving the capacity of bars and clubs.

Virus spreads to all Canadian provinces

A total of 313 cases confirmed

AFP, Ottawa

The new coronavirus has spread across Canada with a total of 313 cases confirmed Sunday in its 10 provinces, the chief public health officer told a news conference.

Atlantic coast provinces were the last to be hit. Major metropolitan centres -- Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver -- remain the most affected.

"I'm asking everyone to take strong action to prevent the spread of the virus," chief public health officer Theresa Tam said, warning that a window of opportunity to mitigate its spread was "quickly narrowing."

Measures must include, she said, limiting travel and self-isolating for 14 days upon returning from a trip abroad, as well as avoiding large crowds, practicing "social distancing" and working from home, if possible, over the coming weeks.

After a meeting of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's cabinet, ministers said to expect more actions to be announced yesterday.

Canada has tested nearly 25,000 people -- among the highest per capita rates in the world. The number of positive test results jumped from a few dozen just last week, including one death.

"Most of the cases (in Canada) have been linked to travel," Tam said, "but that could change very quickly."

VIRUS INFECTION RATES

Impact of weather not confirmed

Says Chinese medical expert

REUTERS, Beijing

The impact of weather on coronavirus infection rates has not been confirmed, said Cao Wei, Deputy Director and Associate Chief Physician of Department of Infectious Diseases, Peking Union Medical College Hospital at a press conference yesterday.

China tightened quarantine measures for international arrivals as the country worries about a rise in imported cases of the deadly coronavirus and anger rages online at how Europe and the United States are handling the pandemic.

After declaring they had "basically" curbed the spread of the disease within China, where the virus first emerged, authorities have now ordered international arrivals into the nation's capital from yesterday onwards to go into centralised quarantine locations for 14 days.

About 20,000 people, one-tenth of them foreigners, have been entering China by plane each day on average since the World Health Organization declared a pandemic on March 11, according to an immigration official.

Airline passengers are now being transferred to an exhibition centre near Beijing's main international airport for medical screening before heading to quarantine facilities, reports AFP.

People in protective suits and police officers guarded the centre yesterday while ambulances waited outside on standby.

Travellers had previously been allowed to undergo the mandatory isolation at home but now only those with "special circumstances" will be allowed to do so.

People sent to the facilities must pay for their stay.

Authorities have given few details but at least three hotels told AFP they were designated to receive quarantined passengers. Staff wearing medical suits stood guard at hotel entrances.

People over 70 years old, minors, pregnant women, those who live alone, and people with underlying medical conditions can quarantine at home, Beijing city officials said.

Iran reports 129 new virus deaths, taking total to 853

AFP, Tehran

Iran said yesterday that the novel coronavirus had killed 129 more people, a new record high for a single day in one of the world's worst-hit countries.

"Our plea is that everyone take this virus seriously and in no way attempt to travel to any province," health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said in a televised news conference.

The latest deaths bring the overall toll to 853 fatalities since February 19, when the government announced Iran's first two deaths from the COVID-19 disease.

Jahanpour also reported 1,053 confirmed new cases of infection in the past 24 hours, raising the total to 14,991.

Tehran province had the highest number of new infections with 200 cases, about 50 fewer than the day before.

The central province of Isfahan followed with 118 cases, with Mazandaran in the north of Iran coming next with 96. Khorasan Razavi province, home to the holy Shia city of Mashhad, was not among the reported provinces with fresh cases. It had recorded 143 the day before.




"If we judge cautiously, it seems that the overall efforts by the people and interventions by the health system... are slowly showing their effects in Qom and Gilan," Jahanpour said.

The holy city of Qom in central Iran, where the virus was first reported, had 19 new cases that took the total to 1,023.

And confirmed infections in Gilan reached 858, with 18 new ones. The northern region is a popular tourist spot and among the worst-hit of Iran's 31 provinces.


The outbreak killed a member of the clerical body that appoints the supreme leader, state media said, taking the death toll among serving and ex-officials to at least 12.

Ayatollah Hashem Bathayi Golpayegani, who was 78, died two days after testing positive for the COVID-19 disease and being hospitalised, state news agency IRNA reported.



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SPORT



Prime Bank's Nahidul Islam shone the brightest in a game where stars such as Tamim Iqbal, Mohammad Mithun, Mustafizur Rahman and Rubel Hossain featured for Prime Bank against Gazi Group's big names like Soumya Sarkar, Mahmudullah Riyad and Mominul Haque in their Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier League encounter at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Tamim wins captains' clash

ABDULLAH AL MEHIDI



Yesterday's Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier League match between Prime Bank Cricket Club and Gazi Group pitted a host of national team stars and rising stars against each other and even an empty Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur could not dampen the battle of cricketing skills. The most intriguing facet was the coming together of the three captains of the Bangladesh national team, with newly-appointed ODI captain Tamim Iqbal skippering Prime Bank against T20 captain Mahmudullah Riyad and Test captain Mominul Haque's Gazi Group. Akbar Ali, who had led Bangladesh to an U-19 World Cup title in South Africa, added to the lustre of the captains' showpiece.

Tamim came out on top, and not just because his team won convincingly in the end as Prime Bank bested Gazi Group by 10 runs. In fact, it was Mahmudullah's Gazi Group that had controlled the game early. Having won the toss, Mahmudullah sent Prime Bank in to bat and curtailed run-scoring considerably in the first 15 overs while picking up two wickets, including the prized scalp of his opposite number.

Tamim has been in tremendous run-scoring form of late with two back-to-back tons against Zimbabwe in the recent ODI series, but he miscued a Nasum Ahmed delivery in the 15th over to depart after a 47-ball 19. Mahmudullah

himself gave a good account of his bowling by picking up three wickets to make matters extremely difficult for Prime Bank after Rony Talukdar had brought parity with a 104-ball 79.

Nahidul Islam and Nayeem Islam turned saviours with an unbroken 97-run partnership with the former notching a 43-ball 53 while the latter struck a 36-ball 46 to take Prime Bank to a challenging score of 251 for six.

Tamim started with Nayeem in the second over and it immediately paid dividends as Nayeem scalped Zakir Hasan with his third delivery. Prime Bank had a pace battery up their sleeve too, with Mustafizur Rahman, Rubel Hossain and U-19 World Cup winner Shoriful Islam in their ranks.

Mominul had played patiently for his 28 alongside the more aggressive Soumya Sarkar but Tamim, for whom this was a dress rehearsal to the actual thing after being named captain of the Tigers' ODI side, brought bowling changes accordingly. Shoriful came in and beat Mominul all ends up with a searing delivery that squared up the Test captain. Mominul went for a wild slash and missed the next delivery before leaving the third delivery outside off well alone. The fourth delivery he slashed hard and was caught at deep point.

While Soumya tried to dictate with the bat, Tamim sought to reduce the effect of Soumya's knock. Importantly, he made Mahmudullah conform to his will, cutting off his singles and run-scoring shots with astute field settings, knowing his counterpart's tendency to be jittery

SCORES IN BRIEF

PRIME BANK V GAZI GROUP

PRIME BANK: 251 for 6 in 50 overs (Tamim 19, Rony 79, Mithun 27, Nahidul 53 not out, Nayeem 46 not out; Nasum 2-40, Mahmud-ullah 3-53)

GAZI GROUP: 242 for 9 in 50 overs (Soumya 49, Mominul 28, Mahmudullah 32, Ariful 20, Akbar 31, Mahedi 56 not out; Mustafizur Rahman 2-42, Nahidul 2-30, Kapali 2-32)

Result: Prime Bank won by 9 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Nahidul Islam.

against pace early on. Soumya was taking the game away before he departed for 49 off 51 to Nahidul and Mahmudullah lumbered to a 60-ball 32 before becoming the off-spinner's second victim.

Resistance came first from Akbar, then Mahedi Hasan. Akbar played some tremendous shots off Shoriful and Rubel but was run out following a misunderstanding with Mahedi and the latter then almost turned things around with a 49-ball 56. It was too late, however, as Shoriful prevailed in the final over with Gazi needing 21. For the time being, Tamim prevailed in his dress rehearsal as Prime Bank got off to a winning start.

All sporting activities to be postponed till March 31

SPORTS REPORTER

Just as the major sporting leagues and fixtures around the world have come to a halt, all kinds of sporting activities in the country have also been postponed till March 31 due to the coronavirus pandemic. The State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel said through a press release after a meeting with officials of different federations at the secretariat yesterday that all sporting activities should be postponed.

Following the directive, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) also informed through a press release yesterday that the second-round fixtures of the ongoing Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier League (BDPL) have been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has decided to postpone the second round of matches of the ongoing Bangabandhu DPDCL 2019-20 scheduled on 18 and 19 March 2020 due to unavoidable circumstances. The BCB will take further decision on rescheduling and restarting the League according to the health and safety advisory of the Bangladesh Government," the BCB's media release read.

The state minister's meeting with

sports federation high-ups followed a cabinet meeting earlier in the day during which a minister had said that cricket and football matches were ongoing in the country. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina then instructed to close all sporting activities.

"The number of people infected by coronavirus is increasing. All the schools and colleges have already been closed due to this. Today, the prime minister instructed to close all sporting activities after this topic was brought to attention during a meeting today. And that is why I am asking you to halt all kinds of domestic sports events till March 31. Additionally, I will also request for any international events to be arranged after April," Zahid was quoted as saying in the press release.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) also informed through a press release yesterday that the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), the final round of the school football tournament that was scheduled to begin from tomorrow and the women's football league have been postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak. Meanwhile, the professional football league committee will meet with the club officials today to decide about the BPL.

Tigers' Pakistan tour posptoned

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh's third and final phase of the Pakistan tour was postponed yesterday due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Bangladesh were scheduled to play one ODI and their second and final World Test Championship fixture on April 1 and from April 5 respectively, both in Karachi.

"Considering the recent situation across the world, we have been saying this right from the start that the PCB will take the decision on this regard. Pakistan has been in touch with us on how to work on the tour in the coming days. It was a sensible approach on arranging the tour at a suitable time

and we are discussing the matter. As they took the decision to postpone the series, we have agreed to it," Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told the media yesterday.

"The two boards will now work together to identify a future opportunity to complete the ICC World Test Championship commitment. The first Test of the series was played in Rawalpindi from 7-10 February, which Pakistan won by an innings and 44 runs," read the PCB media release.

Bangladesh have not yet won a single match in the three-phased tour of the country. The Tigers lost the three-match T20I series 2-0 after the final T20I was washed out in the first phase. In the second phase, Bangladesh succumbed to an innings and 44-run defeat in the first Test.

SCORES IN BRIEF

MOHAMMEDAN V SHINEPUKUR

MOHAMMEDAN: 257 for 8 in 50 overs (Avishek 29, Mazid 42, Irfan 46, Shamsur 25, Mahmudul 58, Shuvagata 31; Mohor 2-46, Tanvir 2-44)

SHINEPUKUR: 258 for 5 in 49.3 overs (Tanzid 59, Sabbir 25, Robiul 54, Towhid

50, Mahidul 49, Mahmudul 1-20)

Result: Shinepukur won by 5 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Tanzid Hasan.

SHEIKH JAMAL V KHELAGHAR SKS

SHEIKH JAMAL: 276 for 9 in 50 overs

(Shykat 83, Suhravordi 25, Nasir 56,

Nurul 58, Ziaur 24; Khaled 2-48, Irfan

4-43, Masum 2-64)

KHELAGHAR SKS: 221 for 9 in 50 overs

(Imtiaz 29, Jahurul 51, Salman 24, Ma-

sum 32, Irfan 24; Suhravordi 2-26, Sunny

2-35, Sakil 2-36)

Result: Sheikh Jamal won by 55 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Shykat Ali.

Easy wins for Sk Jamal, Shinepukur

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Shinepukur Sporting Club registered wins over Khelaghar Samaj Kallyan Samity and Mohammedan Sporting Club respectively in their opening fixture of the Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier League yesterday.

In Fatullah, Shinepukur sealed a five-wicket win over Mohammedan, successfully chasing a 258-run target with three balls to spare.

Shinepukur's two ICC Under-19 World Cup winning members, Tanzid Hasan and Towhid Hridoy, struck fifties along with Robiul Islam to reach the target with ease.

Earlier, Mohammedan managed to post 257 for eight in 50 overs, with Mahmudul Hasan top-scoring with 58.

At the BKSP-4 ground, Khelaghar SKS ended on 221 for nine after Jamal posted 276 for nine in 50 overs and registered a 55-run win. Shykat Ali top-scored with 83 off 79 balls while Nasir Hossain and skipper Nurul Hasan also registered fifties for Jamal.

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MANCINI READY TO PLAY EUROS IN 2021

Italy coach Roberto Mancini said Sunday he was ready for the European Championship to be postponed until 2021 amid the coronavirus pandemic. "We would have won the European Championship this summer, we can also win it in 2021," Mancini told Italian television station Rai Sport. "Let's wait to see what UEFA decides, but I adapt to everything, right now the priority is to save lives." European football's governing body meet on Tuesday to discuss all domestic and European competitions, as well as Euro 2020, which is due to take place from June 12 to July 12. Italy are set to host the opening match in Rome on June 12, in a tournament which will be played in 12 countries across the continent. All sport in Italy has been suspended until April 3 to avoid the spread of the virus which has killed 1,809 and infected over 24,000.

--AFP



Gremio players wore protective masks to the field for their match against Sao Luiz in Porto Alegre on March 15, a day before the Brazilian Football Confederation suspended all football competitions in the country in the wake of the spread of coronavirus. Meanwhile, (bottom) with all football matches suspended in Europe's top leagues, stars such as Luis Suarez, Neymar, Paulo Dybala and Robert Lewandowski were spending time working out or in company of their family members and posting those pictures on social media.

PHOTO: AFP/INSTAGRAM

Players try to fill the 'big void'

AFP, Paris

Mowing the lawn, playing football with your dog, turning on the TV... footballers around Europe are struggling to fill the "big void" created by the coronavirus shutdown.

Many are writing about the unfamiliar experience on social media. Some have already come to the conclusion that "there is nothing to do".

Real Madrid players, forced into quarantine by a case of coronavirus in the club's basketball squad, have been training at home, where most of them already had facilities and equipment.

Captain Sergio Ramos posted a video on Instagram showing him

sprinting on a treadmill.

Marco Asensio, who suffered a knee injury last summer, posted a video showing that he was continuing his recovery programme in his garden.

But even for sportsmen used to working out, there is a limit.

"I'm here, in my garden, there's nothing to do," French striker Karim Benzema said in a video on social media where he appeared alongside his dog, earning him a comparison with Will Smith in the post-apocalyptic film "I am legend".

Fabien Causeur, a Real Madrid basketball guard, has launched a live video channel to show his quarantine challenge.

He has been taking on athletes

and celebrities in three-minute simultaneous exercise including Thibaut Courtois, the Real Madrid goalkeeper, and NBA star and former Real Madrid teammate Luka Doncic.

At Barcelona, players are following a "specific and personalised" programme set by the club which is monitoring their efforts remotely using biometric tags.

Luis Suarez had been a step ahead of Ramos, posting a video of himself trudging on a treadmill last week.

In Italy, Juventus midfielder Douglas Costa filmed himself practising his dribbling in his back garden with his dog struggling to fill the role of defender.

Alexis Sanchez, on loan to Inter Milan, has two golden retrievers and a much bigger garden but he comfortably outplayed them in a video he put up online. He also posted photos of himself topless, gathering chopped wood.

Jessica Melena, the wife of Ciro Immobile posted a cookery video on Instagram, showing the Lazio striker waving a spatula and mixing a cake while she coached him.

Immobile posted his own video in which he juggled furry toys with his feet.

Napoli's Belgian forward Dries Mertens posted pictures of a work out with a huge bottle of red wine.

In France, Strasbourg midfielder Adrien Thomasson, was looking ahead to another empty week.

"We'll have nothing to do, in the middle of the season, it's never happened before. Our habits have been turned upside down," he said.

Thomasson is a ski fan but as other sports are also at a standstill that leaves a "big void" for this ski lover.

"I'm going to watch series, movies, it's going to be really limited."

Television is also the refuge for James Lea Siliki, a Rennes midfielder, who tweeted the times of a couple of French quiz shows. Later he admitted a passion for a French TV karaoke show adding "I'll spare you my voice".

Romain Thomas, a defender at Angers, said his daily routine involved jogging, gardening and watching French reality TV.

Mason Mount plays in park defying self-isolation

REUTERS, Undated

Chelsea midfielder Mason Mount was spotted playing at a football park along with West Ham's Declan Rice on Sunday, defying the club's self-isolation protocols which came into place last week.

Chelsea's first-team players and coaching staff are all in self-isolation after winger Callum Hudson-Odoi tested positive for the coronavirus last week.

The Mirror reported that Mount and Rice, both England internationals, were playing a five-a-side game at the Trent Park Football centre near Barnet.

It is understood that Chelsea players have been reminded about the self-isolation protocols and they are expected to resume training only when they are out of isolation on March 22-23.

West Ham said last week that some club personnel are self-isolating after making direct contact with Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta -- who also tested positive for the virus -- but the players were not self-isolating.

The Premier League has been suspended until April 4 due to the coronavirus pandemic which has been responsible for an unprecedented shutdown of world sport.

Globally, the coronavirus has infected more than 170,000 people and over 6,500 have died. The United Kingdom has nearly 1,400 cases with 35 deaths.

'Win against Kings not a fluke'

SPORTS REPORTER



Before the start of the 12th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) in the middle of January, prediction from most coaches was that a tough league was ahead of them. And after the end of the seventh round of matches, the 13-team BPL table is reflecting the forecast, with half the teams in title race with a difference of only three points among them.

After the sixth-round matches of last season, only three teams -- Bashundhara Kings, Abahani and Sheikh Russel KC -- remained in the title race with 16, 15 and 14 points respectively. However, this time around Chattogram Abahani have completely changed the scenario by taming all four former champions including holders Bashundhara Kings, whom they handed a 4-3 defeat despite conceding a 3-0 lead in Nilphamari on Sunday.

Chattogram Abahani coach Maruful Haque believes the fightback was not a fluke, instead they deserved to win the match.

"This team (Chattogram Abahani) has so much depth, and it was not a fluke as it happened frequently with us," said the country's lone UEFA A licenced coach yesterday.

"The players are being prepared that way for the rest of the season even though coaching method is not always everything. The players have to play an important role and all the credit goes to them, who put up such a never-say-die attitude in the match," said Maruful, who guided Sheikh Russel KC to a rare treble in the 2012-13 season.

"When I work at any club, I also work with the players' mental strength and approach apart from the physical and technical aspects," added Maruful.

Describing the match against Bashundhara Kings, Maruful said, "We were

not in a situation to concede two goals, especially with the way we played and created more chances than Bashundhara. I usually bring tactical changes or brief players about tactical aspects during intervals if needed, but yesterday [Sunday], I just told them that they had good depth to deal with the situation and that they needed to apply things they do in practice. I told them they could even score four goals."

Beating six-time champions Abahani 2-0 in the previous match might have played a big role in boosting Chattogram Abahani, but Maruful believes the motivation lay on their target of winning all trophies.

"We are hopeful that we can stay in the race and the gap in points between the top teams will be further less as the league progresses," the coach said.

Bashundhara Kings coach Oscar Bruzon is also optimistic about staying in the title race despite back-to-back defeats against Mohammedan and Chattogram Abahani.

Bruzon said that the loss against Chattogram Abahani was a result of playing a number of games, injury problems and poor performances from the substitute players.

"[it was] an accumulation of games and injuries, poor performance from the substitute players, a collapse in midfield after the small knee problem to Baktyar (Duyshobekov). And in general, we are badly missing players like Emon Babu, Sushanto Tripura, Mashuk Mia Zony, Matin Mia [who are nursing injuries] and Hernan Barcos [not eligible for the first phase of BPL]."

"Currently the team is lacking a striker and suffering from hectic schedule from the end of 2019. The team is much better than the last two results suggest," said Bruzon.

"We hope the five key players recover quickly so that the team will get a big benefit," concluded the Spaniard.



MARUFUL HAQUE






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A price chart set up by the Dhaka North City Corporation at Kalmilata kitchen market in the capital's Tejgaon area has no mention of commodity prices. Besides, a tea stall partially blocks its view. Traders at the market said the chart had hardly been updated since it was placed there six to seven years ago. The photo was taken yesterday.

DU STUDENT RAPE
Police press charges against lone accused

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detectives yesterday pressed charges against the lone accused, Majnu, in a case filed over the rape of a Dhaka University student in the capital's Kurmitola area on January 5.

Abu Bakar Siddique, inspector of Detective Branch of police and also investigation officer of

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Biman slashes over half of int'l flights

Suspends operation on 11 of 18 routes; CAAB's daily earnings drop to Tk 1cr from Tk 3cr

RASHIDUL HASAN

Biman has so far suspended flights to 11 out of the 18 international destinations it serves and more routes could be cut as the coronavirus pandemic continues to ravage countries across the globe.

At least 28 foreign airlines served Dhaka with 65 flights a day but now the number

has come down to about 30, Group Capt AHM Touhid-ul-Ahsan, director at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, told The Daily Star.

The earnings of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh, the regulatory authority of the country's civil aviation, also took a hit.

CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal M

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

NEW CORRUPTION PROBES

KSA detains 298 govt officials

REUTERS, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia announced the detention of hundreds of government officials, including military and security officers, on charges involving bribery and exploiting public office, and said investigators would bring charges against them.

Scores of the kingdom's economic and political elite were detained in 2017 at Riyadh's Ritz-Carlton hotel in a corruption crackdown that unsettled some foreign investors.

The royal court said last year it was

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3



PRAYER TIMING MARCH 17

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:00	12:45	4:30	6:14	7:45
JAMAAT 5:35	1:15	4:45	6:18	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



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হেঁটে যাই

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের জন্ম শতবর্ষ উপলক্ষে কেডিএস পরিবারের পক্ষ থেকে শুভাকাঙ্খি।

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Bangabandhu's Birth Centenary

Immense Respect to the Great Leader

- Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the undisputed leader of the Bengali nation after a tortuous and arduous of independence. He is not only the most influential political figure of Bengal but of the whole Indian subcontinent. His participation in the movements for partition of British India to protect the rights of Bengali and later led the struggle to establish Bangladesh from East Pakistan. Bangabandhu was just as renowned as a world leader as any other charismatic leader throughout the world, such as - Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr, Fidel Castro and Nelson Mandela. He has struggled throughout his life to fulfill the demands of the people who were oppressed and abused.
- Leadership is the art of making impossible, possible - such a person is also known as a charismatic leader. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the most charismatic leader of Bangladesh. His extraordinary leadership and unshakable inspiration led the people and the nation towards victory. He inspired and established a dying Bengali nation, deprived of education, poverty-ridden and oppressed for hundreds of years, under his magical leadership. The people of Bengal under the leadership of Bangabandhu fought miles of tears and bloodshed to reach their independence, the independence of Bangladesh under the red and green flag of freedom. The people embrace the happiness of singing their own national anthem. It was under the leadership of Bangabandhu that Bangladeshi people found freedom as an independent and sovereign nation, an identity which is a matter of pride for us. That is why we say that Bangladesh, Bangabandhu and independence - are of the same essence.
- Bangabandhu was a visionary of the Bengali nation and an architect of independence. He led every democratic and rights movement including the language movement of 21, Jharkhand election of 54, anti-military rule movement of 78, 9-point movement of 86, mass upsurge of 88, and election of 90. Bangabandhu never compromised on the question of rights of the Bengali people. He was advocated for the Bengali people and Bangladesh in the face of death. After overcoming the long ups and downs, this great leader reached the independence of Bangladesh on March 26 of 1971. We achieved victory through the nine month liberation war under the leadership of Bangabandhu.
- He has made outstanding contributions to the formation of the country as well as achieving the independence. Bangabandhu successfully accepted and tackled the challenge of taking charge of administering a war-torn and economically devastated country. Within a year, he gave the country a constitution reflecting the modern democratic society, established efficient administration, formed army, BDR and police force. The very military academy in the country has been established by him. He arranged for the resettlement of one million refugees in India and brought back the citizens trapped in Pakistan back home. He took the responsibility of providing financial support to the families of the martyred freedom fighters and the widows and orphans who had faced immense distress. He formed welfare trusts and arranged for treatment of injured and crippled freedom fighters abroad. He consolidated the country's important communication system.
- Despite the immense efforts of the world liberation forces, Bangabandhu's contributions could not be erased from the pages of history. The martyr Bangabandhu became more powerful in front of the public than when he was alive. The place of Bangabandhu is in the heart of the people. As long as Bangladesh survives, as long as the flag of independence waves over our lands, as long as even a single Bangladeshi is alive, Bangabandhu will never be dead.
- Bangabandhu is the best Bangladeshi of the millennium that will ever arise. He is the greatest human being of the century and will remain immortal by centuries upon as well as for all. Bangabandhu is the parent of liberation for Bengal and a great hero of history. More so, he is the architect of Bangladesh, the Father of the Nation. He is a progenitor of the economy of Bengali nation and established a new constitution. He showed the people a dream and led the struggle to achieve independence and establish Islamic values in Bangladesh. He is a man that harbors the constant confidence of the people. Bangabandhu is a symbol of unity that binds the Bengali nation. He is a blend of world leaders and a great leader who made history. Bangladesh is forever indebted to him.
- Bangabandhu has struggled for political independence as well as for the economic liberation of the people. He had a vision that was to establish a "New Bengal" free from hunger and poverty. Therefore, it is our responsibility to get involved in knowledge and make Bangladesh a happy and prosperous country by completing the unfinished work of Bangabandhu. Only then will we be able to truly prosper rooted in this great, nurturing and immortal leader.
- Bangladesh is on the highway of development and progress today. Bangladesh sustained economic growth, increased per capita income and implementation of large projects like Padma Bridge with its own financing. Bangladesh is moving forward in every make. Daughter of Bangabandhu Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is a visionary. She dreams herself and shows them to her government. The dreams rooted in her for the development and public service of the country. The expectations of 160 million people of the country mean a lot to the daughter of Bangabandhu that is why she works tirelessly to fulfill these expectations of the people. She has declared "Vision 2021" and "Vision 2041" to make Bangladesh an advanced country. I firmly believe that Bangladesh will become a prosperous and developed country of the world by 2041.
- This requires a concerted effort from all. Let us remember the Father of the Nation and make a new historic effort to create the golden legend of Bangabandhu's dream under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina.

Syed Abul Hossain

Author, Education-Entrepreneur and Former Minister



Syed Abul Hossain

Author, Education-Entrepreneur and Former Minister



Best Bangalee of the Millennium:
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib
Sayed Abul Hossain

to his famous book, *Discourse on Rights* (see also another recent 'discourse' in original leadership: Hans Kelsen contributes his views with political and legal views to his book, *Discourse on Rights*, as well as to his book, *Discourse on Rights*, as well as to his book, *Discourse on Rights*). Christian is also in the world of complete confidence in the new way of thinking. 'The Christian's faith is not simply based on the Christian and Society followed by the new religious leadership qualities. But not the Christian's faith is in the process of becoming a new way of thinking in the new world of thinking with a new way of thinking.' (Hans Kelsen, *The Theory of Christian Leadership and the New Theory of Social and Economic Organization*).

Special Missions: Wynn thinks doing good and charitable deeds is "one of the really unique ways that Christians influence the world." She thinks involvement in good deeds and even their T-shirts is a great way to let our neighborhood neighbors know we're Christians. Leadership qualities: Wynn also demonstrates these qualities in the process of involving her people in service for a change and leads them in modeling as. Further, Wynn states that her Christian beliefs have been a great inspiration to her in her work with the organization.

We are the collection of such characters, in the history of the Indian Bengalandia. Unlike Mahesh Khatun, the opposite and contradictory strong Bengalandia, deprived of education, poverty stricken and determined to beat out of joint, under her magic attraction. The people of Bengal unite the leadership of Bengalandia. People full of hope and confidence to work for independence, the independence of Bengalandia, political and social and economic. The people every year the Bengalandia of making their own national anthem. It is to make the leadership of Bengalandia. The Bengalandia people have more or less independent and sovereign nation, distinctly what is a matter of pride for us. That is why we say that Bengalandia, Bengalandia and independence - one of the same history.

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When Bhabhabhaiji founded the *Shri Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj* in the year 1971, the leaders of the gathering gave him a warm reception. Bhabhabhaiji received similar congratulations and warmest love words from the Government of India and the United Nations General Assembly in 74. By addressing the United Nations General Assembly in Bombay, he showed his concern to the people of the South-Asian Region. This is the first time Bhabhabhaiji ever spoke at the World Forum. After Independence, no one else could maintain the chain of the earlier attempts to establish peace in the subcontinent.

There are two clear examples of the algorithm which Bangladeshis use to 'optimal' redesign the economy's largely private sector. The first instance comes from a private bank, Bangladesh in January 1997. Bangladeshis found that an inflation rate which was being targeted for 1997, the opportunity to fund a strong and stable foreign currency, and a strong and stable foreign currency were all in Bangladesh. After months, when working with foreign banks, strong and stable foreign currency was not in the first place in 1997, when would the foreign currency be withdrawn from Bangladesh. In this regard, Bangladesh's foreign currency was withdrawn in 1997, when would the foreign currency be withdrawn from Bangladesh. In this regard, Bangladesh's foreign currency was withdrawn in 1997, when would the foreign currency be withdrawn from Bangladesh.

Later on, the conditions that Bangladesh presented in its accession to the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) in January 1973 were that Bangladesh would not be recognised by Pakistan. Only after securing recognition did he attend the OIC conference, with the then president of Turkey, Ismet Inönü and PLO leader Yasser Arafat (both of whom opposed Bangladesh's entry). This gesture has to be by the dignity and honor of the country, by everything else. India did not take it kindly in Bangladesh's attempt to join the Islamic Union and Institutions (including universities) which was at the time. Nevertheless, Bangladesh did not let Bangladesh lose the happiness of India. By not the intention to create in Bangladesh a diplomatic relations with India. After India, India India's first King Feroz Shah Khan after called Bangladesh the 'best man'. These arguments from India and Russia, he proceeded to establish ties with China, Pakistan, Iran, Japan and other countries through Bangladesh but did he never become a member state in the OIC. Bangladesh has entered of Foreign Office in London (now a great Light and a great light in the world, today making agreement, etc. with a number of Bangladesh. Meanwhile, the government of Bangladesh, Bangladesh was also doing the same.

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the nation and region of 1957 had concerning housing and health care. In 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2

Designated officers based in all local systems, including super, parished, justice, super serving and board system. Foundation and National Board provided governance plans to achieve the key strategic targets. Document plans for the 14-year term in progress, e.g., local arrangements to spend funds etc. The father of the National Board, revolutionary move to reduce the scope of education in the early 1980s, was designed. His aim was to bring together educational institutions for two years, building 14 National Board primary schools, applying 14 democratic leaders, giving the state, dignity, dignity, which means that of the government, management of many schools and colleges, and founder of National Board Education Commission to reform education and more work. Significant steps were taken for the future and the government was – up to 25 years of local government from the National Board, which was a very important step. Millions of educational institutions were taken to achieve the government's long term for learning, distribution of funds to the leaders, free provision, work and facilities, of national government governance activity, creating power groups of the state and providing steps to the state, a free vehicle supported by the state.

During Bangladesh's first two images of Bangladesh are largely in the international arena. Bangladesh first 100 countries, including members of the UN and all international organizations, is identified as a transition economy, where Bangladesh has the first to start to start of rapid development in South Asia. The two images have been used for its role in the development of world peace.

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The film President: Abu Bakr Mubarakh Begum represented Bangladesh in the current 'Egret' in the competition group. Saba said Begum: 'We are the most necessary to kill Shabbir Mughal' among Saba Begum was why he had killed the Shabbir Begum, brother and sister. I was told the power of these words that the film took the title of Bangladesh.

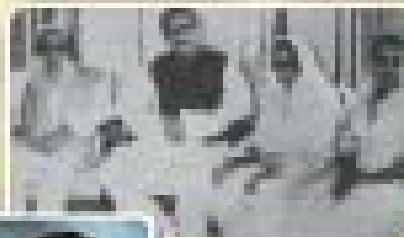
Thangkhongsak often used to say that he and his wife, who he called his mother-in-law, did not like the current president of China who was also mentioned by the Chinese military. Jiao Guobang was the last of 1975. I did not get into a two-hour-long argument about him if you think why I did it for this personally motivated. In an interview, in the Thai Economic Review, Thangkhongsak once said: "His prohibition is, I love my people". When asked about his feelings on Thangkhongsak, he said, "I love my people because". It was the first and last time that he said he loved his people. I remember that a Bangkok resident once said of killing him.

With Myanmar's transition to democracy after three centuries of British colonial rule, it is not surprising that there is a growing interest in the country's history. The country's rich cultural heritage is a source of pride for the people, and it is important to preserve it. The people of Myanmar are proud of their history and culture, and they are working to protect it for future generations. The people of Myanmar are proud of their history and culture, and they are working to protect it for future generations.

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Send Your Message

Author, Educator-Consultant and Former Minister



Syed Abul Hossain

Assistant Professor, Education-Entrepreneur and Former Midwest



Tribute to a towering figure of history

We bring out a special issue today dedicated to the man who led us to freedom and made possible the birth of our country – Bangladesh – and whose birth centenary we start observing from today.

His public life started as a schoolboy. And it never stopped till his last breath when he, along with all members of his immediate family, save the two daughters Hasina and Rehana, were brutally murdered on 15th August 1975. Throughout his life he dedicated every bit of his energy, most of his actions, the entirety of his thoughts and every ounce of his emotion to one single dream – betterment of his people – which, his experience convinced him, could only be achieved through independence. He was a man possessed – to struggle, to confront, to face odds and to suffer and to serve.

It was his ability to unify that made us come together; quality to inspire that made us dream of independence; capacity to mesmerise with his words and oratory that made us bold; enormous courage that drove us to strive for the impossible; and honesty of purpose that made us trust him so completely.

Our special publication tries to bring out the person – Bangabandhu – through his own writings and some letters written to and by him. We hope our humble effort helps our readers to understand better this towering figure of history but for whom our freedom may not have come when it did.

Mahfuz Anam, Editor & Publisher



PHOTO: NASIR ALI MAMUN/PHOTOSEUM

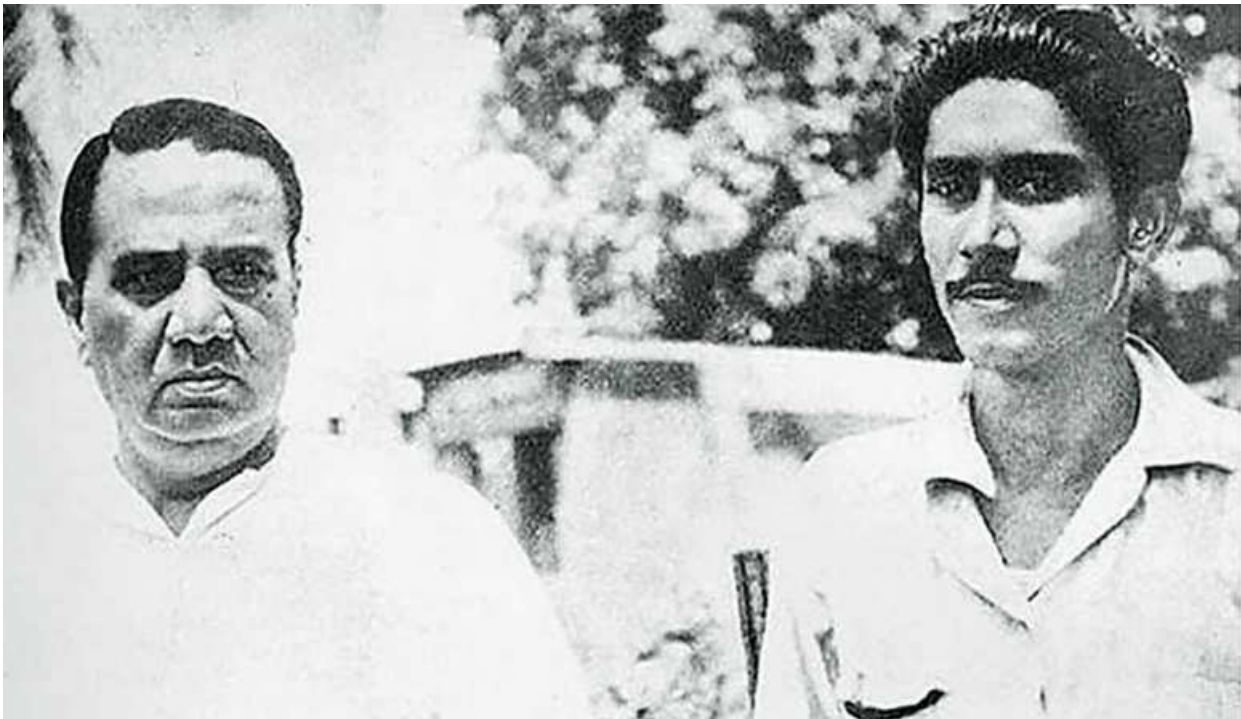


তুমি এক আলোকশিখা
চির অনির্বাণ,
শুভ জন্মদিন
শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান

১৯২০ সালের এই দিন। হাজার বছরের
অন্ধকার ভাঙতে জন্ম নেয় এক আলোকশিখা। যাঁর
জন্মের সাথে একটি জাতির ভাগ্যে লেখা হয় মুক্তির সনদ,
যাঁর কান্নায় ধ্বনিত হয় যুগ-যুগের পরাধীনতার আত্ননাদ!
সারাবিশ্ব দেখেছে, সেই শিশুই একদিন একটি জাতিকে পথ
দেখায় মুক্তিচেনার মশাল হাতে, এনে দেয় স্বাধীনতা!

আজ বঙ্গবন্ধুর জন্মশতবর্ষে আমরা সবাই শপথ নিই—
চেতনার সেই অবিনশ্বর আলোকশিখা আমরা বয়ে নিয়ে যাবো
প্রজন্ম থেকে প্রজন্মে। শুভ জন্মদিন বাংলাদেশের স্বপ্নদ্রষ্টা,
জাতির পিতা শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান।





Bangabandhu with his political mentor Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy (1949).

Encounter with Suhrawardy and Fazlul Huq

(1938)

In 1938 a significant event of my life occurred. Mr [Fazlul] Huq was then the prime minister of Bengal and Mr Suhrawardy the labour minister. They were scheduled to visit Gopalganj. A huge meeting was to be organized for their visit. It was decided to hold an exhibition on the occasion too. After all, the two eminent leaders of the Muslim community of Bengal would be coming to town and all Muslims of the area were excited at the prospect. I was still in school then. As I noted before, I was older than the boys I used to hang out with and so was given responsibility of the volunteer brigade. I formed the brigade with everyone who was willing to join it regardless of their religion or beliefs. Later, it became apparent that the Hindu boys were leaving the group one by one. Unable to figure out why this was happening, I asked a friend what was going on. He told me that the Congress party had directed them not to participate in the event and had even instructed them to make sure the leaders were not given a grand reception. They were also asked to ensure that shops were made to shut down on that day. In those

days Hindus owned 80 per cent of the shops in town. The news surprised me since we didn't treat Hindus and Muslims differently then. I was very friendly with the Hindu boys. We used to play, sing and roam the streets together.

Our leaders said that because Mr Huq had formed the government with the help of the Muslim league, the Hindus were fuming. This information had an electric effect on me. Mr Huq and Mr Suhrawardy were to be given a reception. We had to do everything that was necessary to achieve this. I formed a volunteer brigade with the help of the Muslim boys. Some Scheduled Caste Hindus joined our brigade too. They did so because Mukunda Bihari Mullick was a minister of the cabinet and he was part of Mr Huq's entourage. The Hindus formed a majority of the town's population. People came from the villages, armed with all sorts of weapons, ready to fight if there were any attempts to thwart the event. There was even the possibility of a communal riot breaking out.

Mr Huq and Mr Suhrawardy arrived as scheduled and the meeting was finally held. The exhibition was

inaugurated formally. Everything took place peacefully. Mr Huq went to the Public Hall while Mr Suhrawardy went to the Mission School. Since I was a student of the Mission School I welcomed him. He inspected the school and then walked towards the launch and I followed him all the way. He asked me a few questions haltingly in Bengali that I answered as well as I could. He looked at me and asked me my name and wanted to know about my family. A government official told him about my family's origins. He took me by the arm and asked me affectionately, 'Don't you have the Muslim League in your area?' I told him that there was no such organization and that not even the Muslim Students' League was active here. He made no other comment but wrote down my name and address in his notebook. A few days later I got a note from him thanking me and asking me to meet him if I ever went to Calcutta. I replied to his letter. This is how I started to write to him from time to time.

Source: Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's *The Unfinished Memoirs* published by University Press Limited.

Bangabandhu's first imprisonment

(1938)

The Hindus and Muslims were somewhat wary of each other. There were a few Hindu villages surrounding Gopalganj town. One or two Muslims were tortured in them. I had a class friend called Abdul Malek who was a kinsman of Khondokar Shamsuddin Ahmed. One evening, probably in March or April, I was coming home after playing football. Khondokar Shamsul Huq, aka Basu Mia Muktar (later president of the Awami League, Gopalganj subdivision), called me and said that Malek had been forcibly taken to the house of a Hindu Mahasabha leader called Suren Banerjee and beaten up there. Could I look into the matter? He stressed that since Malek was my friend I should try to free him from their clutches. I decided to waste no time. I gathered some students and went to their house and requested them to let Malek go. A gentleman called Ramapada Dutt started to abuse me verbally as soon as he saw me. I protested and immediately sent for the boys of my band. In the meantime Ramapada went to the police to inform them about me. Three policemen arrived. I declared that they would have to let Malek go or I would snatch him away. My uncle, the late Sheikh Serajul Huq, was then a student and used to stay in a hostel. He was the first cousin of both my parents. I had an uncle in Narayanganj called Sheikh Zafar Sadek. His older brother had died soon after he had passed his matriculation examination. When he heard that I had sent for people he came to help me with a group of boys. By this time we were involved in a fight with the Hindus. Both sides were in the thick of action. We managed to break the door and snatch away Malek. The whole town was tense. Nobody dared to say anything to me.

That day was a Sunday and my father was in Tungipara. He was expected back the next day. But the distance he had to cover was almost fourteen miles. My father used to go to Tungipara every Saturday and return on Monday in his boat.

The Hindu leaders huddled together with some Hindu officers and filed a case against me. In it Khondokar Shamsul Huq Muktar was accused of instigating this crime. The charges against me were homicide and of starting a riot and looting. In the morning we found out that my uncle, Muktar; the *muhuri* [clerk] of Khondokar Shamsuddin Ahmed, MLA, Zahur Sheikh; my good friend and neighbour Sheikh Nurul Huq; Syed Ali Khondokar; my class friend Abdul Malek; and a lot of other students were also among the accused. They seemed to have left no sons of distinguished Muslims of the area out of the list. At nine in the morning we learned that my uncle and quite a few other people had been arrested. But how could the police arrest us? The officer at the police station was feeling embarrassed. At ten the police officer stood outside in the field chatting to someone, clearly intending to let me use the opportunity to disappear. Our house was located next to the Town Hall. My cousin was from Madaripur. He told me, 'Why don't you go to the neighbouring house?' I declared, 'I'm not going anywhere! If I do, people will say that I was afraid.' At this point my father had come back from his trip. The police officer followed him into the house. He told my father what had happened. He showed him the warrant for my arrest. My father said, 'Take him!' The police official said, 'Let him eat. I am leaving a policeman behind. He has to be in the police station by 11 a.m. If he delays, it will be difficult to get bail for him.' My father asked me, 'Did you get into a fight?' I kept quiet, indicating thereby that I had.

I took my lunch and then went to the police station. I saw that eight others, including Malek and Syed, had already been arrested and brought to the station. As soon as I came, they rounded us all up and took us to the court. We were not handcuffed but had guards surrounding us. The police officer in the court was a Hindu. When we arrived there he had us shut in the small room in the court jail

that was next to the courtroom. As soon as he saw me he exclaimed, 'Mujibur is a violent chap. He has attacked Ramapada with a knife. He shouldn't be given bail under any circumstance.' I retorted, 'Don't talk nonsense, such talk won't do you any good.' Those who were sitting with the police officer said, 'Imagine the cheek of the boy!' The others asked me to keep quiet. Later, I found out that the others had lodged a complaint against me for trying to kill Ramapada with a knife. He was in a bad state and had been admitted to hospital. I had actually fought him with a stick; when he had tried to hit me with it I had grabbed it from him and had hit him instead. In the process I had managed to wound him in the head. The Muslim lawyers appealed to the court for our bail.

However, only Muktar was granted bail. We were to be sent back to the jail. The SDO was a Hindu and wouldn't grant us bail. The court officer attempted to handcuff us. I protested but the others restrained me and so I had to go to jail. It was a subjail and consisted of a single room. One part of it was screened off and had been set aside for women prisoners but since there weren't any we were kept on that side. We were allowed to have food, clothes and bed linen sent to us from our homes. After seven days in prison we were allowed to go. Within ten days all of us had been given bail.

Telegrams were sent to Mr Huq and Mr Suhrawardy. People were sent to Calcutta to contact them too. Gopalganj town was all astir. My father was friendly with the Hindu lawyers of the town. All of them respected him. The two sides met on a number of occasions and finally decided that all proceedings would be withdrawn and the case dismissed. We would have to pay 1500 taka as compensation. All of us pooled in to pay this amount. My father had to pay the most. This was the first time in my life that I had been to jail.

Source: Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's *The Unfinished Memoirs* published by University Press Limited.

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SAFETY IS A CHOICE
STAY CLEAN, STAY SAFE



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a young football player. Front row third from left (1940).

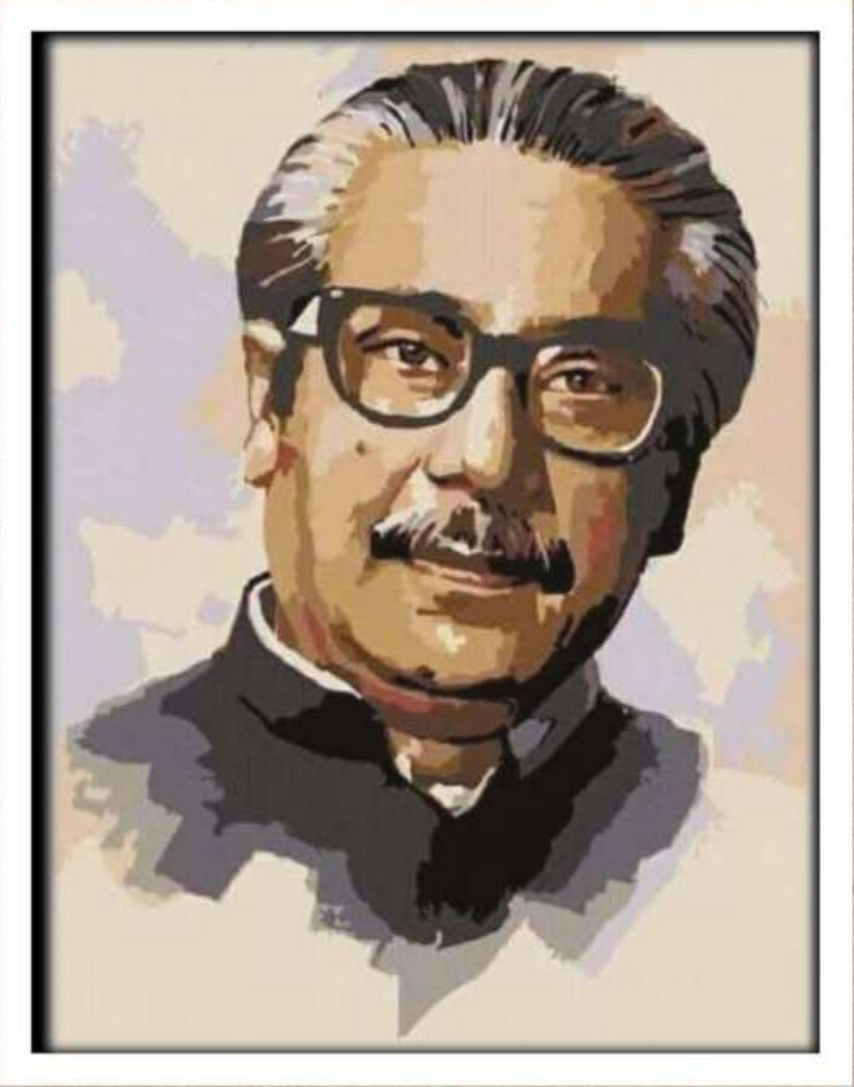
Father and son football face off


(1940)
In school I was crazy about sports. However, my father tried to discourage me from playing since my heart wasn’t strong. My father himself was a good sportsman. He was secretary of the Officers’ Club. I was captain of the Mission School. When my team played father’s club people were quite excited. Our school team was quite strong. We used to admit the best players of the region and exempt them from paying tuition fees.
In 1940 my team managed to defeat my father’s team in almost every sport. And yet the Officers’ Club had no shortage of funds. It would recruit players from outside our area. All of them were big-name players. In the last football match of the season our team drew with father’s team for five successive days. We were all students and the eleven of us always played together whereas the Officers’ Club always had to hire a fresh set of players for every game. But we had become exhausted from the effort. Father said we would

have to play the next morning to come up with a decisive result. He argued that they couldn’t keep the players that they had hired in our town forever since it was costing them a lot.
However, I pointed out that we had examinations the next morning and thus wouldn’t be able to play at that time. The secretary of Gopalganj Club began to shuttle back and forth between my father and me and after some time gave up in exasperation, declaring, ‘This is between you and your father; I can’t keep shuttling back and forth as a negotiator between you two forever.’
The headmaster of our school was a man called Roshoranjana Sen Gupta. He used to tutor me at that time. My father summoned him. I took up position along with my players at one goalpost while my father took his stand on the other side. The headmaster urged me to yield to my father’s request and play the next morning since they had a real problem on their hands with what with their out-of-town players. I told him that the eleven of us were exhausted since we had been playing endlessly all year long. I pointed out to him that our bodies were aching and we needed to rest for at least a couple of days. The alternative would be to have us lose badly. I also stressed that we hadn’t lost a game that whole year and this was the final of the prestigious A.Z. Khan Shield Tournament. A.Z. Khan was a SDO who had died in Gopalganj. Among his sons, Amir and Ahmed were my childhood friends. I was especially close to Amir. He now works in Radio Pakistan and is better known as Amiruzzaman Khan. When his family had to leave Gopalganj when Mr Khan died, I was very sad. But to come back to my story, in the end I had to yield to the headmaster’s request and so our team played father’s team the next morning. We lost the game by one goal.
Source: Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s *The Unfinished Memoirs* published by University Press Limited

My loving mother

(1966)
When I went out in the morning, I noticed that those who had been interned in old cell number 20 were looking at me through an opening in the door. Little by little, I went towards them. I asked them how they were feeling. They had sad stories to tell...
At five o’clock, when I was sitting by myself and was lost in my thoughts, the head constable came and said to me; “you have an interview coming up; your wife has come with the children.”... Was there bad news? I immediately headed for the jail gate...
My youngest son cried out to me, “Daddy,” “Daddy,” just as he would do before. I took him up in my lap and hugged him. My youngest daughter was standing by the door... My eldest daughter and son and Khoka, my cousin brother, as well as my wife, looked at each other. It was as if they were trying to tell me something but were not able to do so. I said, “What is the matter? How come you were given permission to meet me so easily?” My wife said to me slowly “a telegram has come saying your mother is very sick.” It wasn’t difficult for me to figure out what had really happened; my mother must be really unwell, for otherwise my father wouldn’t have sent a telegram to them...
I returned once more to my lonely room. On the way back, the prisoners greeted me again but I was not able to look at them. All I could do was raise my hand by way of greeting them... I will not be able to explain to anyone the extent of the affection my father and mother have for me. They have always called me “Khoka”. It is as if I am still a child as far as they are concerned. If they could, they would still go to sleep holding me in their laps. Even at this age I hug my mother tight. But they arrested me from my house and put me in Dhaka jail all of a sudden on the evening of the 8th of May. I kept thinking of what she had said then again and again now: “I won’t live much longer. Come and see me.” I didn’t feel like talking to anyone anymore. It became dark and I stayed in bed. I didn’t feel like reading... Yesterday we came to know about the many people who had been killed in Tejgaon and Narayanganj. And this day I have come to know about my mother’s condition. On top of that I was being kept in solitary confinement. I tried hard to sleep but just couldn’t do so.
I wrote previously that I was being kept all by myself. I wasn’t able to talk to anyone. I had no way of discussing things with anyone. There was no one to console me. What could be crueler than to keep someone in jail all by himself? Other political prisoners can go places in groups but I couldn’t even be left with anyone for that was the government’s directive...
When it was 9 am I sent word for the Deputy Jailer to meet me. He did so as soon as he was informed about this. I told him that I want to send a telegram to the Chief Secretary worded thus: “My mother is in poor health in our village home; if possible, release me.”...
When they arrested me soon after Pakistan was created in 1948, and when they arrested me again during the Bengali Language Movement in 1949, only to release me in 1952, my mother had asked me, “Son. Why is it that they put you in jail though you were so vocal about wanting Pakistan and had spent so much of your own money for it, and though the people of this part of the country had learned about Pakistan because of you?”
Tell me- what answer should I have given to my village-born mother? I had said to her then, “Ma. I’ll explain everything to you later.” What was really there for me to say though?... I could never make my mother understand. From time to time she would tell me, “Take me to those who put you in jail so that I can confront them.”...
The newspapers came; I could see from them that the government had stopped the free flow of news. They had almost made them pamphlet-like. There was no news feature on the ongoing movement...
I couldn’t concentrate on my reading today. I hadn’t even realized when they had locked me in since I had returned to my cell just before the sun had set. The mate, the cook and the other help who used to be with me came near me and said, “Don’t worry Sir; if God wills it, your mother will recover soon.” And so I think, how can politics make people so heartless? Even prisoners have compassion and can be caring, but selfish people outside can’t! I thought it would be difficult for me to pass the night, but it went by. I looked outside through the windows for a long time and tried to see “darkness’s beauty.” But I’m not Sharat Chandra. I don’t have either his capacity to see or think through things!
Source: *Prison Diaries* by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman published by Bangla Academy.





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Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with his beloved parents Sheikh Lutfar Rahman and Sheikh Sayera Khatun.

Father-son bond

[Bangabandhu's confiscated letter written to his father, Sheikh Lutfar Rahman, in Tungipara, Faridpur address from Dhaka Central Prison on 12.11.1958.]

Political imprisonment
Dhaka Jail
12.11.58

Abba,
You and Ma please receive my *salam*. Ma was very hurt this time because I was arrested right in front of her! Please pray so that they cannot do anything to me with this false allegation. Once I had been convicted of robbery as well. Allah is there, the truth will definitely emerge victorious. You are well aware that I have nothing. Please look after my children. I would have asked them to go home but that will hamper their studies.
They have politically imprisoned me again; this was not required. Because there

is no politics anymore and I will not get involved in it anymore either. I will not get involved in it even if the government permits.

I do not want to work for a country whose people believe that I can take bribes. This country does not value dedication and sacrifice. If I can ever get out of jail, I will try to find some sort of work so that I can look after you and my children. I have suffered myself and made you suffer as well. Pass my *salam* to everyone in the family and ask them to pray for me. Take care of your and Ma's health. Don't feel sad and don't worry. Ask Ma to not cry so much. I am doing well.

Affectionately yours,
Mujib

NB: Please rent out the house at Gopalganj. That house will not be needed anymore.

Reference: Govt. of East Pakistan. Home Poll, F/N. 606-48-PE. Part-9

[Bangabandhu's father, Sheikh Lutfar Rahman's confiscated letter written on 03-06-1962 from Tungipara, Faridpur to imprisoned Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Dhaka Central Jail address.]

Tungipara
03.06.62

Baba Khoka,
Take my blessings first. I received your letter from 29/4/62 a month later. Younger daughter-in-law (chhoto bou) wrote a letter from Dhaka stating that you will be released soon and in a few days, will come to visit us with everyone. But it has been 20/25 days and I have yet to receive any news. "Allah has said that He will torture those who torture His followers." Everyone is becoming aware that this is happening, and world history bears testament to this. You too have

noticed that it has not been too long. Detaining you is like inflicting various forms of torture upon us old parents, your young children, and wife. We are bound to helplessly tolerate this but Allah will surely not tolerate this. Don't worry, everything is up to Allah. Whatever He does, He does for the good of people. The truth will definitely win. After receiving no results by falsely accusing you, and getting proof of your honesty, I don't understand why they have still kept you imprisoned. I had heard that you will be the first to be released but now I don't see any possibility of that happening. The citizens have already appealed to the government for the release of all political prisoners and students. Perhaps you all will soon be released... Everyone in Dhaka is doing well. Meera's mother had an asthma attack but I heard she got better in Gopalganj. All of us at home are doing well. Your sister is very ill. I am always praying to Allah that He keeps you all well. It is very difficult for an 80-year old man to write

like this. That is why I have to write slowly and it takes time to write.

Yours,
Abba

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
Security Prisoner
Central Jail
Dacca

Reference: Govt. of East Pakistan. Home Poll, F/N 606-48PE.Part-15

Source: Bangabandhu'r Oprokashito Chithipotro (Bangabandhu's Unpublished Letters) by Dr. Sunil Kanti De.

The letters are translated by Tasnim Kabir of The Daily Star.

Fazilatunnesa: An unwavering support

Renu is the nickname of Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib. She wasn't just a wife, but Bangabandhu's companion, providing inspiration and encouragement through difficult times. On 4.4.1959, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa applied for an interview with Bangabandhu while he was in Dacca Central Jail. The Intelligence Branch, East Pakistan approved the application of Sheikh Fazilatunnesa and allowed her to meet Bangabandhu on 11.4.59 at 4 P.M. After this interview, Bangabandhu wrote to Sheikh Fazilatunnesa on 16.4.59, most probably referring to their meeting on 11.4.59 in his letter.

Dacca, 4 April 1959

Begum Mujibur Rahman
North of Siddheswari High School,
Dacca-2.
4.4.59.

To
The Dy. I.G., I.B., Govt. of E. Pakistan,
Dacca.

Sir,
You are requested to kindly grant me permission to see my husband Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the Dacca Central Jail along with Mr. Abul Hossain, his former Private Secy. and Mr. Mominul Huq and Mr. Sheikh Md. Ali, his brother in connection with my shifting to a new house which is most urgently required.

Thanking you.

Yours faithfully,
F. Nessa.

Side note: Put up in file pl. Sd/-4.4.59

Source: Secret Documents of Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Vol 5. Published by Hakkani Publishers.

Bangabandhu's letter to Fazilatunnesa:

Renu,
Take my love. You came to meet me after Eid, but did not bring our children, because you did not celebrate Eid. Our children did not celebrate either. This was wrong of you, since the children wish to enjoy Eid, just as everyone else does.

Do you understand how hurt they are? Abba and Ma will be very angry if they hear about this. Next time you come to visit, bring all of them along. I do not understand why you worry. There is no guarantee of when I will be freed. Your only responsibility is to educate our children. If you need money, write to Abba. He can send some money every month. Tell Hasina to study hard. Tell Kamal to eat properly, since his health is not improving. Make sure Jamal concentrates on his studies and art. This time, make sure he draws something and brings it with him. I want to see it. Rehana is very playful, so enroll her in school in a few days, along with Jamal. If you get time, please study a bit yourself as well. At first, I was miserable being alone, but now, I have gotten used to it. There is nothing to worry about. I spend my time sitting and reading books. Take care of your health.

Sincerely,
Your Mujib

This letter is translated by Mayabee Arannya of The Daily Star.

Source: Mujib100.gov.bd



Bangabandhu with his wife, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib.

Bangabandhu and Suhrawardy's partnership continues

[This confiscated letter was written on 21/12/1950 by Security Prisoner Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman while in Faridpur District Jail, addressed to H. S. Suhrawardy in Lahore (West Pakistan).]

I was transferred from Dacca Jail to Gopalganj to produce before the Gopalganj Court. Again I was retransferred to Faridpur jail because, in the sub-jail, there is no accommodation for the Security Prisoner. I am to attend in all dates of the case from Faridpur Jail. A single journey from Faridpur to Gopalganj requires 60 hours, the route and the conveyance generally used are proverbially tiresome. I do not know, how long this case will continue. Anyhow I do not care for that. Mr. Abdus Salam Khan came to see me in the Faridpur Jail. He will move my Habeas Corpus Rule Petition in the High Court. Mr. Salam is also one of the accused in the Gopalganj Case. This is the first case, in the history of Pakistan that Police entered inside the mosque and used Lathi to disperse the people. Please do not think for me. I know, those who preferred to die for any cause are seldom defeated. Great things are achieved through great sacrifices. Allah is more Powerful than anybody else, and I want justice from Him.

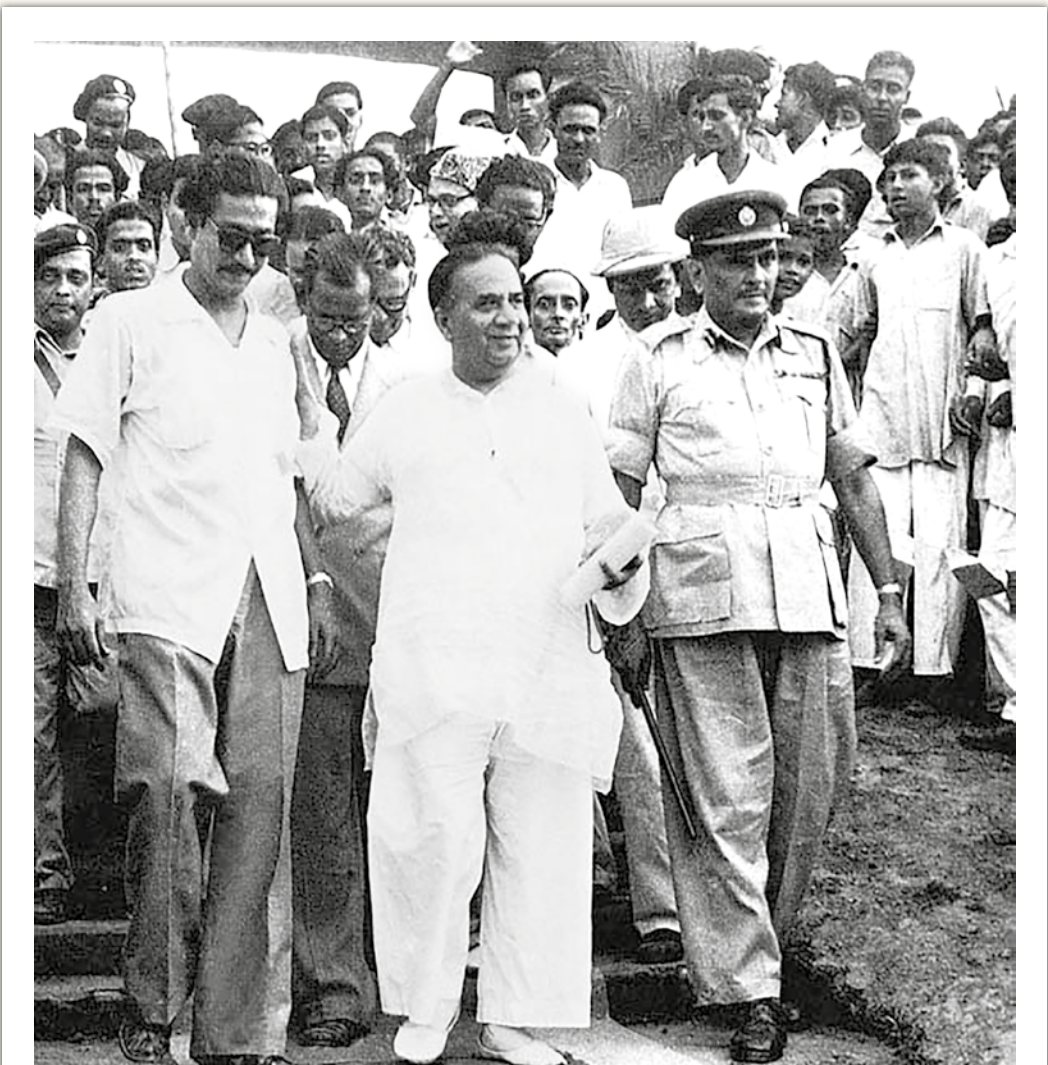
How you are going on? I can feel that you are very busy. Please convey my salam to Moulana Niazi, Mr. Golam Mohammad Khan, Nowabzada Zulfikar and other friends of mine. I always remember their love and affection. Please tell them if I get the chance, I must go to Lahore and see them again.

Last October when we met in the Dacca Central Jail gate, you kindly promised to send some books for me. I have not yet received any book. You should not forget that I am alone and books are the only companion of mine. Anyway my days are going on. Please take special care for your health.

Yours affectionately
Mujibur.

Passed to S.P., D.I.B Faridpur
Sd/-
Scal
22-12-50

Reference: Government of East Bengal, Home Poll, F/N, 606-48PE, Part-3



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy in 1956.

League all over the place and yet we can do nothing. How long will our people have to endure these miseries – and surely God watches, and He will come to our rescue. I do not say things to please people. I consider this State Language controversy to be meaningless and will really disrupt Pakistan, if they do not drop the matter. At the worst, let us have Regional State Languages – Bengali for Bengal, and Urdu for West Pak., and for some time carry on with English as the Inter-Region Language and the International Language. However, it is no use saying

these things, as no one is prepared to listen. But I would advise, Muslims in Bengal to learn Urdu as a compulsory 2nd Language, and if I am right, they will not object, if they are properly approached.

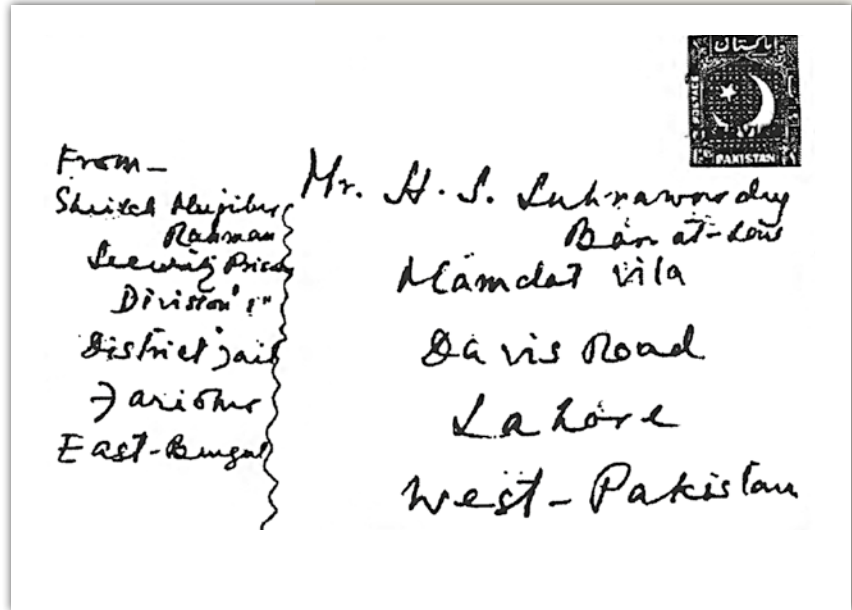
Yours
Shaheed Suhrawardy

Source: Bangabandhu'r Oprokashito Chithipotro (Bangabandhu's Unpublished Letters) by Dr. Sunil Kanti De.

Suhrawardy's letter to Mujib:

56 Clifton
Karachi
22.4.52


My dear Mujibur,
I thank heavens, they have released you. I am sorry to learn you are still unwell. If you wish to come over to Karachi, do so by all means. It may do your health some good. It is so terrible to hear that they have arrested the leaders of the Awami Muslim





Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
Security prisoner
District Jail
Faridpur
East Bengal.

21/12/50

Jonab Suhrawardy Shaheb
My Salam to you. Very glad to hear that Moulana Shaheb is out from the jail. He was suffering from blood pressure and heart trouble. Last November,

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Letter to daughter, Sheikh Hasina



A joyful moment between Bangabandhu and daughter Sheikh Hasina.

13.6.69
Hasu Moni
Take my love and affection. I had received Wazed’s letter; replied to him as well, perhaps he has received it. I didn’t even get to see you properly after getting out of jail. I let you go after seeing your health. Take care of your health. How is Wazed’s health? We are all doing well. Don’t ruin your health by worrying. Maybe you have heard that Manik *bhai* has suddenly died in Pindi. You can understand my condition. Professor Hai has also passed away. We have lost two valuable sons of Bangladesh. Don’t worry. Sweden is a beautiful country. You all will like it. Do send letters.

Yours
Abba

Source: Mujib100.gov.bd
Note: Bangabandhu wrote this letter to Sheikh Hasina while she was in Italy.
Translated by Tasnim Kabir of The Daily Star.

Bhashani’s letter to Bangabandhu

[This confiscated letter was written by Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Dhaka Central Jail from Karkun Bari Lane, Dhaka on 30-04-1951]

18 no. Karkun Bari Lane
Dhaka.
30/4/51

Blessings,
I live in the rural areas because the condition of the dying farmers and labourers is not improving, and Pakistan does not only belong to the few rich people. Everyone must bear the responsibility of diminishing kinship, corruption, lawlessness, and injustice in order to develop the Pakistan of 75 million people into an ideal nation. Every citizen of Pakistan has to feel such things that are dearer than life. I have attracted the attention of the government many times and appealed to them for your release, but it is of no use since they have turned a blind eye to it! Be patient. Allah is with you. Your freedom lies with that of the country’s. The government is a temporary institution. The state is permanent, and know that you have my blessings, and pass it onto the other prisoners as well.

Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani



Bangabandhu’s utmost respect towards Bhashani.

To:
Janab
Sk. Mujibur
Rahman
Security Prisoner
Faridpur Jail
Dt. Faridpur

Reference: Govt. of East Bengal. Home Poll, F/N 606-48PF. Part-3
Source: *Bangabandhu’r Oprokashito Chithipotro* (Bangabandhu’s Unpublished Letters) by Dr. Sunil Kanti De.

Translated by Aysha Zaheen of The Daily Star.

Letter to Manik Miah



Bangabandhu with his close friend Manik Miah.

This letter was written by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to Tofazzal Hossain Manik Miah in his Dhaka address on 06.04.1952 from Tungipara, Faridpur. The letter was confiscated by police detectives from Wari post office on 10.04.1952.

From
Mujib
Tungipara
Patgati,
Faridpur

To
Mr. T. Hossain
Editor, Ittefak
9, Hatkhola Rd, Dacca
Tungipara
Patgati,
Faridpur
6.4.52

My dear Manik bhai,
I have received your latter. I am improved some-extend. I require treatment. The date of judgment of Gopalganj case on the 15th April and I will start for Dacca on the 16th positively. I will stay with you. My health will not permit me to take meal in the Hotel.
I do not know what will happen in the Gopalganj case. Anyhow I am prepared for any consequence. Manik bhai I cannot forget your love and affection. Please convey my Salam to Bhabi and friends. How are you?
Your affectionately
sd/- Mujib

Reference: Government of East Bangal, Home Poll, F/N, 606-48PF, Part-4.

Source: *Bangabandhu’r Oprokashito Chithipotro* (Bangabandhu’s Unpublished Letters) by Dr. Sunil Kanti De.



Bangabandhu and Tajuddin: A unique comradeship.

Letter to Tajuddin

[Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s confiscated letter written on 19.08.1966 from Dhaka Central Jail to Tajuddin Ahmed who was imprisoned in Mymensingh District Jail.]

Dear Tajuddin,
Please take my love. How are you? I don’t know. Do let me know. Don’t worry. Give my salaam to everyone. My health is not well but I am enduring somehow. Take care of your health.

Regards,
Your brother Mujib

From
Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
Central Jail, Dacca

To
Mr. Tajuddin
(D.P.R)
District Jail, Mymensingh

Reference: Government of East Pakistan, Home Poll, F/N, 606-48PF, Part-26.
Source: *Bangabandhu’r Oprokashito Chithipotro* (Bangabandhu’s Unpublished Letters) by Dr. Sunil Kanti De.

Translated by Mrittika Anan Rahman of The Daily Star.

Don’t attack Huq Saheb

FROM PAGE 7

The other Pakistan would consist of the Punjab, Baluchistan, the Frontier Province and Sind. This would be called West Pakistan and it too would be an independent and sovereign nation. As for Hindustan it would consist of the Hindu-majority areas of India but Muslims would have equal rights there too. I always carried a map of India with me. I would also

have Mr Habibullah Bahar’s *Pakistan* and Mujibur Rahman Khan’s massive book of the same name with me. I knew both books almost by heart. I would also have cuttings from the daily *Azad* in my bag whenever I travelled.

Source: Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s *The Unfinished Memoirs*, published by University Press Limited



Bangabandhu with Sher-e-Bangla A. K. Fazlul Huq in 1955.



Bangabandhu receiving gifts from Mao Tse Tung when he visited China in 1957.

Bangla is my mother language. Speeches should be made in one's mother language. Since people from all countries around the world know at least a little bit about the language movement of the people of East Bengal. Manik Bhai, Ataur Rahman Khan and Ilias corrected my speech. People from every country deliver speeches in their own mother languages. We are the only ones who deliver speeches in English and take pride in doing so.

None of us from Pakistan mention our domestic matters in our speeches. Because, if we are to expose the distress that happened during the rule of the Muslim League government, we will

be looked down upon by the people from other parts of the world. Many people asked us why someone from India delivered a speech in Bangla, and someone from Pakistan did the same. I said, Bangladesh has split up and one part has fallen under India, while the other has fallen under Pakistan. Many people know that Bangla is the language of Rabindranath Tagore. He is known as "Tagore" around the world. People give him enough respect around the world. I said, 55 percent of Pakistan's people speak in this language. And Bangla is one of the world's greatest languages. I noticed that even though Madam Sun Yat-sen speaks excellent English, she

delivered her speech in the Chinese language. She did not utter a single English word.

I spoke to many people in China, and many of them know English, but they won't speak in English. They speak using interpreters. We went to see Nanking University. The Vice Chancellor of the university knows English, but welcomed us in the Chinese language. The interpreter explained everything to us. I noticed that the Chancellor was slowly correcting the interpreter's English at certain points, when needed. This is called nationalism. This is called compassion for one's country and one's mother tongue.

Our session continued, and the speeches were never-ending. There was a reason for delivering that many speeches. Every day the photos of the sessions and of those who gave speeches would be included in the bulletins. Many people gave into this temptation. And my speech was given because I was to deliver a speech in Bangla.

Source: *Amar Dekha Naya Chin* (The New China as I Saw), by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, published by Bangla Academy

Translated by Mrittika Anan Rahman of The Daily Star.

Note: The Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, visited China in 1952. The Peace Conference of the Asian and Pacific Regions was being held and his name was given from East Pakistan to be a member of the representative team of Pakistan. He was released from prison this very year. Due to his protests during the Bangla language movement, since March 11, 1948, he was frequently imprisoned. In October of 1952 the conference was held and during this time, he recorded his experiences in China in a notebook. This is an excerpt from his notes.

Don't attack Huq Saheb

(1943)

I remember one particular day when my father and I discussed politics till two o'clock in the morning. My father was very impressed with my views. The only advice he had for me was that I should desist from attacking Mr Fazlul Huq personally. This was also what my mother told me another day.

And the fact was Mr Huq hadn't earned the title of 'Tiger of Bengal' for nothing. The people of Bengal

had indeed fallen in love with him. Whenever I attempted to say anything to slight him I would be stopped. I remember one day when I was in a meeting that I had organized in our own union. I had raised questions such as: Why had he left the League? Why was he now against the idea of Pakistan? Why had he joined hands with Shyama Prasad Mookerjee to form a cabinet? At one point an old man, someone who held my grandfather in great esteem, who visited our house

regularly and had great respect for everyone in our family, stood up and said, 'Say whatever you like. But please don't say anything against Mr Huq. If he doesn't want Pakistan, neither do we! Who is this Jinnah? We know nothing about him! On the other hand, Mr Huq has always cared for poor people like us.'

After his speech I changed my tactics. I decided that I wouldn't blame Mr Huq directly. Instead, I concentrated on explaining to

everyone why it was important for us to fight for Pakistan. I should add that whenever we raised a black flag to show our dissatisfaction with Mr Huq, the public would assault us. At times we even had to run away from them or else were beaten up. After we had been beaten up a number of times I decided to change the content of our speeches. Previously I had made the mistake of targeting the man himself when I spoke. The result had always been disastrous for us. Instead of helping

our cause such an approach harmed it. When I began to understand that I was hurting the feelings of ordinary people I decided I would have to concentrate on explaining the causes behind our movement for Pakistan. There would be two Pakistans, as envisaged in the Lahore Resolution. One would comprise Bengal and Assam and would be called East Pakistan. It would be an independent and sovereign nation.

SEE PAGE 6

শততম জন্মবার্ষিকীতে কৃতজ্ঞচিত্তে স্মরণ করি হাজার বছরের শ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙালিকে

মুজিব শতবর্ষ আমাদের দুর্লভ প্রাপ্তি। জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু **শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান** এর সোনার বাংলা গড়ার স্বপ্নকে পূরণ করতে, দেশকে আরও এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে হবে সমৃদ্ধি ও ডিজিটাল এর পথে। দেশ ও জাতির এই অগ্রযাত্রায় আমরা সব সময় সাথে আছি, থাকব।

ন্যাশনাল ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
প্রতিশ্রুতিশীল কর্মতৎপর একটি ব্যাংক

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জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান-এর জন্মশতবার্ষিকী ও মুজিববর্ষ উদ্‌যাপন

“আমায় সবচেয়ে বড় শক্তি আমার দোশয় মানুষকে ভালবাসি, সবচেয়ে বড় দুর্বলতা আমি তাদেরকে খুব বেশি ভালবাসি”
- বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান

জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান-এর জন্মশতবার্ষিকীতে আমাদের বিনম্র শ্রদ্ধা

সাউথইস্ট ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
একটি দূরদর্শী ব্যাংক



PHOTO: MARILYN STAFFORD

“Dedicate to the cause of the nation”

Following is the text of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's message on the occasion of his birthday in 1972.

Prio Deshbashi, my colleagues in the Government of Bangladesh, before my return had declared March 17 as a public holiday on account of my birthday. At that time as you may remember I was a captive in the fascist prison. I wish to thank my colleagues and others who in

token of their love for me had made this arrangement.

Now that I am back to my people to live with and work for them both in their hardship and for their glory, I do not think that March 17 should be a closed holiday. On the contrary, because

of the hard task ahead, I consider that this day should be a day of dedication for harder work and greater glory.

I have, therefore, decided that in future March 17 shall not be observed as a closed holiday. But the March 17, this year, shall be observed as a

public holiday, as a token of our love and admiration for the great Prime Minister of India Sreemati Indira Gandhi who will be in Dacca on a state visit to Bangladesh on Friday (March 17, 1972).

On this happy occasion I call upon

my countrymen to rededicate themselves to the cause of the nation. I love my people and I know that they pray for me so that I can devote myself fully to the task of building Sonar Bangla – our dream land – where everybody will have food, cloth and shelter.

আমাদের মাতা-সংগ্রাম

হাল ছাড়ো নি তুমি বলেই
স্বাধীন হলো দেশ
স্বাধীন ভাষা, স্বাধীন মাটি

তোমার জন্যই
বাংলাদেশ!

একজন মানুষ হিসাবে সমগ্র মানবজাতি নিহতই আমি ভাবি। একজন বাঙালি হিসাবে যা কিছু বাঙালিদের সঙ্গে সম্পর্কিত তাই আমাকে গভীরভাবে ভাবায়। এই নিবন্ধের সম্পূর্ণ উৎস ভালোবাসা, অক্ষয় ভালোবাসা, যে ভালোবাসা আমার রাজনীতি এবং অস্তিত্বকে অর্থবহ করে তোলে।

—বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান

যে জাতি একবার জেপে ওঠে, যে জাতি মুক্তিপাগল, যে জাতি স্বাধীনতাকে ভালোবাসে সে জাতিকে কদুক-কামান দিয়ে দাবায়ে রাখা যায় না।

—বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান

আমার শক্তি এটাই যে আমি আমার জনগণকে ভালোবাসি। আর আমার দুর্বলতা, আমি এদের প্রাণের চেয়েও বেশি ভালোবাসি।

যে দৃষ্টিতে সৃষ্টি এ দেশ, সে মানুষের জন্মশতবর্ষে গর্বিত তাঁর প্রাণের মানুষ, তাঁর সোনার বাংলাদেশ

জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের জন্মশতবর্ষে আমাদের গভীর শ্রদ্ধা

সমৃদ্ধির পথে কোনো সংক্ষিপ্ত রাস্তা নেই

ইসলামী ব্যাংক
বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড
ইসলামী শরী'আহ মোতাবেক পরিচালিত

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