

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

"Our Lips Are Sealed"

by Fayza Haq

Shamima Akhter Pushpa's father Rowshannuddin died in the Freedom Movement on January 6th in a mine blast in Dinajpur near Rajbari with 600 others. Pushpa recounts, "When my father died our financial problems became acute. My mother was young, and basically from the village, and did not know the ways of the world. If my maternal uncles had not come forward to help we would surely all have perished in this hard cruel world."

"From Jessor we came to live in Khulna in a house that was allotted to us. My mother would go here and there for work and we small children grew up as best as we could by ourselves. There was no one to even guide us with our studies at home. Our brother, not much older than us, kept us protected as much as he could. My mother was supposed to get a sizeable pension but all she received was Tk.100 a month," she continues.

Pushpa is today doing her masters at Jaggarnath College and works at an NGO, earning Tk.4,500 a month, and living at the Nilkhel Working Women's hostel. She comments, "I do not understand the purpose for which our fathers died. The martyrs have brought independence but the people in power are not concerned as to how their children are eking out an existence. None of the governments, who have got control of the country since '71 have cared. They just say a few sympathetic words on December 16 and March 25 but take no positive steps to rehabilitate the children of those who lost their lives in the service of the nation. There is, for instance, no quota system in the educational field or where jobs are concerned."

She continues, "We cannot even talk of punishment of the Razakaars because Sheikh Mujib himself has forgiven them. I think it was a mistake on his part. He should surely have taken some action against them. This does not appeal to me at all because I feel that they should have been duly punished."

Recounting her life without a father, Pushpa says, "I realised I had no father only when I was in class 3, although I lost him when I was two years old. At that time I did not realise how vulnerable a young person is without a father. Yes, we do go about our work, and even hold jobs, but we do not feel secure. My two brothers Babu and Labu are at Khulna and at the Dhaka City College, while my eldest brother Firozuddin Mukul works in the



Middle East, doing a minor job, and supports the family. If my father were alive I would perhaps study something more professional than being in the general line."

Pushpa adds, "The authorities did little for us. In fact, the Mukti Joddha office in Khulna was run for quite some time by a Razakaar and he would curiously show us the door if we appeared. People in general knew that we were weak, being without a father and taunted us. I don't have much hope in the BNP government as the Awami League should have solved our problems long ago."

The people for whom my father died did not come to our aid. Now people are gradually forgetting about '71. With the BNP siding the Jamaat there is little hope for minor people like us."

"Projorono '71" to which I belong, is only two years old and all it does is hold meetings once a month so far. There has been no fund raising. We only hope to bring up the topic of providing jobs to the children of the Freedom Fighters at the Parliament level. Even if we did not have to pay rent for the house allotted to us, with its two rooms, it would be a great help," Pushpa said.

She continues, "I feel that the spirit of the Liberation War has not materialised. Leave aside economic stability, we do not even have social security. Hijacking and rape abound and this was not so in the days of my mother."

Does the memory of her father help her in overcoming crises? "My father's colleagues show sympathy but who can live on sympathy alone? And who wants to be pitied and looked down upon? My father's martyrdom is not helping me in any way," she replies.

She feels that the history of the Freedom Movement is being distorted. "It is 23 years since we got our freedom but most children today do not appreciate the value of it. Their parents do not tell them anything about it. The only ones who are acutely aware of the Freedom Movement are the family of the martyrs. There is lip service in March and December but little else," she comments.

As regards fundamentalism she says, "It only brings chaos to the country. The people like the Jamaat who encourage it, are, in my opinion, despicable. We are helpless. If we, as children of the martyrs create waves we might have to face the same cruelty as our fathers did. So our lips are sealed."

Victory Day observed in Rajshahi, Khulna, Ctg

RAJSHAHI, Dec 17: The 23rd Victory Day was observed here yesterday with pomp and grandeur, reports BSS.

Various socio-cultural, political, educational and other organisations observed the day through separate programmes.

The day began with the booming of 21-gun salute at one minute past twelve midnight Wednesday.

National flag was hoisted atop private and public buildings on the occasion.

A colourful parade of police, ansars, VDP, girls guide, BNCC and boys scouts followed by physical display of school students and juvenile organisations of the city was held at Rajshahi stadium in the morning.

Divisional Commissioner of Rajshahi M Aminul Islam attended the parade as chief guest and took the salute.

BNP, Awami League and other political parties also observed the day in a befitting manner.

Khulna

The 23rd Victory Day was observed in Khulna Thursday with renewed pledge for safeguarding the national independence and sovereignty.

Different political parties, socio-cultural organisations,

student bodies and trade unions planned elaborate programmes to mark the day in a befitting manner.

Twenty-one gun salutes heralded the day at midnight. Thousands of people thronged the Shaheed Smriti Soudha at Gollamari to place wreaths there in the morning.

All the public and private buildings were colourfully decorated along with the national flag atop them.

Chittagong

The Victory Day was observed in the port city and elsewhere in the district Thursday with traditional enthusiasm and renewed pledge to further consolidate sovereignity and institutionalise democracy.

Political parties, trade unions, professional bodies, students and socio-cultural organisations and different institutions have drawn up elaborate programmes befitting the occasion.

City chapters of Bangladesh Nationalist Party, Awami League, Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh and Jatiya Party held discussions and cultural functions at their respective party offices on the day.

Weather

No change in temperature

By Staff Correspondent

Dry weather with clear sky is likely to prevail over the country.

Met Office forecasts night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The country's highest temperature of 28.5 degrees Celsius was recorded in Cox's Bazar and Feni and lowest of 10.2 degrees Celsius was recorded in Srimongol yesterday.

The sun sets today (Saturday) at 5:15 pm and rises tomorrow (Sunday) at 6:36 am.

The maximum and the minimum temperatures and relative humidity recorded in some major cities and towns of the country yesterday are:

Cities/Towns	Temperatures in degrees Celsius	Humidity in percentage
Dhaka	Max 26.6 Min 12.0	77 67
Chittagong	26.8 14.2	80 60
Rajshahi	25.8 13.0	69 79
Khulna	26.2 12.6	78 72
Barisal	26.8 12.5	89 82
Cox's Bazar	28.5 15.0	73 67
Sylhet	27.8 14.4	69 65
Dinajpur	25.2 12.0	88 73

Biswas, Khaleda greet Wangchuck

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday greeted the King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, on the occasion of the National Day of Bhutan, reported BSS.

Twenty-one gun salutes heralded the day at midnight.

Thousands of people thronged the Shaheed Smriti Soudha at Gollamari to place wreaths there in the morning.

All the public and private buildings were colourfully decorated along with the national flag atop them.

President Biswas also wished King Wangchuck and the friendly people of Bhutan good health, happiness, peace and prosperity.

In a separate message Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia facilitated the King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck on the same occasion.

In the message to the Bhutanese King, Begum Zia expressed her confidence that the close bonds of friendship and cooperation that so happily exist between our two friendly neighbouring countries would be further strengthened in the years ahead to the mutual benefit of our peoples.

Begum Zia also wished the Bhutanese King's good health, happiness and long life and the friendly people of Bhutan continued peace, progress and prosperity.

JU Pharmacy Graduates Assoc's silver jubilee festival opens

By Staff Correspondent A week-long silver jubilee festival of the Pharmacy Graduates Association began at the Jahangirnagar University yesterday.

Chairman of the Pharmacy Department, Dr Jibon Roy inaugurated the festival at the Social Science Lecture Gallery of the university.

He said that the age-old system of water supply in the city would be renovated.

Taka 62 cr water treatment plant in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Dec 17: A water treatment plant will be set up here at a cost of Taka 62 crore. State Minister for Land Kabir Hossain said here today, reported BSS.

Work on the project will start during the current fiscal year and it will be completed within two years, he added.

He said that the age-old system of water supply in the city would be renovated.

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to

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