



President Iajuddin Ahmed, left, and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed place wreaths at the grave of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Tungipara in Gopalganj yesterday marking the National Mourning Day.

President, CA pay homage at Tungipara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday paid homage to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on his 33rd death anniversary.

The president and the chief adviser placed wreaths separately at the grave of Bangabandhu at Tungipara in Gopalganj. They stood in solemn silence for a few minutes when army bugles played the last post, paying tribute to the father of the nation.

Later, the president and the chief adviser, accompanied by senior civil and military officials, offered special prayers, seeking eternal peace for the departed soul of Bangabandhu and for the peace, progress and prosperity of the country.

Army Chief Gen Moeen U Ahmed, Navy Chief Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizim and Air Force

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Effusive tributes to Bangabandhu



National flag flies at half mast to mourn the killing of Bangabandhu.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation yesterday paid effusive tributes to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the 33rd anniversary of his death with the day observed at state level as National Mourning Day after a six-year break.

On this day in 1975, the father of the nation along with most of his family members was assassinated by a splinter group of the armed forces. His two daughters -- Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana -- escaped the bloodbath since they were abroad at the time.

Bangabandhu's fiercest speech and decisive call for independence on March 7, 1971 -- 'Ebarer sangram amader mukti sangram, ebarer sangram swadhinatar sangram' -- united and spurred the entire nation on to the Liberation War.

In line with a recent High Court

(HC) ruling, the caretaker government reinstated August 15 as National Mourning Day and a public holiday.

As the day regained its official status, it was observed this time with renewed spirits, huge preparations at various levels and wider public participation.

Awami League (AL) and its front organisation units in the capital and elsewhere in the country organised food distribution programmes for the destitute and children at orphanages. Black banners were hung at these places.

The day used to be officially observed during the AL rule between 1996 and 2001. But the BNP-led four-party alliance, after coming to power in October 2001, scrapped the day's official status, which the HC on July 27 this year

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Threats, trickery were Harris' tools for ill-gotten gains

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Lust for wealth coupled with ability to make the most of his position as the political secretary to former prime minister Khaleda Zia earned Harris Chowdhury fancy flats and cars and stashes of notes.

Using threats, winning businesses favourable concessions and grabbing government property, he became set up for life during the BNP-led alliance rule.

Findings of investigations by the Task Force and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) go on and on about shady deals that made Harris a filthy rich.

They reveal how he intimidated former Rajuk chairman and public works secretary Iqbal Uddin Chowdhury into giving him a flat.

Ziaul Islam, Harris' APS in his heyday, threatened Iqbal several times that if he did not concede his boss's demand, he would lose his

job.

Left with few choices, Iqbal gave in. With help from railway contractor Golam M Alamgir, he arranged a flat for Harris in Dhanmondi area in 2003.

Measuring 2,550 square feet, the flat was registered in the name of Harris' son Nayem Shafi Chowdhury. On papers, it was claimed to have been purchased at Tk 12 lakh though Nayem was shown as a student with no specific source of income.

Investigations unearthed that Alamgir had bought the flat from a developer for Tk 47 lakh and spent Tk 3 lakh more for its decoration and furnishings. He passed on its ownership to Iqbal on condition that the latter would pay him in instalments. And this is how a government official of his rank managed to escape Harris' wrath.

Ziaul Islam however told The Daily Star that he didn't need to

threat anyone as Harris himself took care of everything.

Only a year before, Harris bought a flat in Gulshan from Concord Real Estate Ltd. He spent Tk 50 lakh for the 3,900 square feet flat while its market price was at



Harris Chowdhury

least Tk 1.37 crore.

The flat was purchased in the name of his wife Josne Ara Chowdhury. Besides buying the flat at a throwaway price, Harris had some other benefits from Concord. In exchange, he had to manoeuvre a way out for the realtor from a scam case.

Harris received a five-katha plot in Bashundhara residential area from Bashundhara Group. He had the land registered in the name of his daughter Samira Tanjin. He showed the 'purchase' cost to be Tk 3.93 lakh while the investigators conclude that market price of the land was at least Tk 50 lakh.

In fact, it didn't cost him a penny.

That's not all. He went on to have a two-storey building constructed on the plot by Concord Condominium for a cost of Tk 10 lakh. Probes however gathered that

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Shab-e-Barat tonight

UNB, Dhaka

The holy Shab-e-Barat will be observed across the country tonight seeking divine blessings for the well-being of mankind.

The observance of Shab-e-Barat has special significance for Muslims who believe that on this night Allah determines the fate of all living beings for the coming year.

Muslim devotees will spend the night at mosques and houses, offering special prayers. They will also hold milad, visit the graves of their near and dear ones and offer prayers for the peace of the departed souls.

They will also distribute food

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Holiday

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today on the occasion of Shab-e-Barat. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow (Sunday).

BDR to run open sale of rice again

Previous operation's profit yet to be deposited in coffers

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

The food and disaster management ministry will again involve Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in the next open market sale (OMS) of rice despite disputes over depositing of the profit money BDR had earned from the previous sales.

The paramilitary force earned Tk 4.30 crore by selling 35,000 tonnes of rice at their outlets in 2007-08 financial year but it did not deposit the amount to the government exchequer, which disappointed the ministry officials.

The officials said they were against involving the BDR in the OMS again, but they were helpless in the face of "strong lobbying" by some quarters in favour of the BDR.

"We had no way but to involve

them [BDR] again," said a senior official of the food ministry, adding that 10,000 tonnes of rice will be given to the BDR in two phases for OMS operation that starts August 20.

The ministry officials said the BDR will profit about Tk 1.5 crore by selling the rice but the amount too may not be deposited as the two sides failed to reach a consensus over the matter.

Senior BDR officials said on various occasions that the money had been spent to meet the costs of transportation, preservation, hiring labourers, packing and loss of weight but the ministry did not accept the explanations.

The relation between the food ministry and the BDR became

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BDR resumes sale at 100 fair-price outlets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) resumed sale of essentials including rice at its 100 fair-price outlets in the capital yesterday.

"Rice along with other essentials was sold for Tk 30 per kg yesterday in the city's 100 outlets which witnessed a small crowd due to people's nescience about the resumption of sale at the outlets," Col Mujibul Haq, Dhaka sector commander of BDR, told The Daily Star yesterday.

BDR, which previously ran 65 fair-price outlets in the capital, has added 35 more outlets to its tally ahead of Ramadan.

BDR sources said a total of 210 fair-price outlets are in operation now across the country.

The outlets will remain open from 8:00am to 5:00pm every day except Monday. Each person will

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JOURNALIST HAMID MIR From Pakistan

Peres' desperate bid to help 'friend' out

Israeli President Shimon Peres is desperately trying to help his friend Pervez Musharraf who is going through the most difficult time of his political life.

Reliable sources in foreign office have revealed that Shimon Peres is putting indirect pressure on the coalition government in Pakistan through different diplomatic channels not to impeach Musharraf. Peres wants a safe exit for Musharraf and he is also ready to provide security for his friend outside Pakistan.

These sources have claimed that Shimon Peres and Musharraf are in regular contact with each other for the last three years. Both

met first in Davos in January 2005 and after that they had written many letters to each other and exchanged pleasantries on telephone several times.

It is learnt that Peres wrote his first-ever official letter to Musharraf in October 2007 and appreciated his efforts in the fight against terrorism. Musharraf, in his response, thanked the Israeli President for his support and good wishes. These letters were exchanged through diplomatic channels of Turkey.

Peres called his Pakistani friend again a few days ago. Though the details of their conversation were

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Talks over Musharraf 'resignation deal' on Pak coalition completes charges

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's aides are in talks with the government to secure a deal under which he could quit to avoid facing impeachment or criminal charges, officials said yesterday.

Musharraf's spokesman Rashid Qureshi condemned "malicious" Western media reports that he would stand down, but allies and officials from the ruling coalition both indicated that he was considering his resignation.

"Talks are underway and many people are interested that the issue is settled amicably without going into the impeachment of President Pervez Musharraf," key ally and former deputy information minister Tariq Aziz told AFP.

Azim refused to rule out the possibility that Musharraf could

quit before he is impeached, adding though that another option was for him to become a "figurehead" without the power to dissolve parliament.

The coalition, led by the parties of former premiers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, said on Friday it had completed an impeachment charge sheet against Musharraf and would lodge it in parliament next week.

It needs a two-thirds majority in the upper and lower houses to unseat Musharraf. The constitution says there can be a gap of up to 17 days between filing the charges and the impeachment vote.

Senior coalition members confirmed that there were talks with the presidential camp about Musharraf resigning, in return for a guarantee against prosecution for

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Kuwait blacklists its 5 companies for violating labour laws

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kuwait has blacklisted more than five companies of that country for violating labour laws. It may cancel licences of these companies and sentence their owners to a maximum of three years' imprisonment.

The companies were identified following an investigation into the strikes by Bangladeshi workers last month, reported Kuwaiti newspaper the Arab Times on Thursday.

Thousands of workers, mainly Bangladeshis, went on strikes over several demands including pay hike. Kuwaiti police tortured the workers before deporting around 1,000 of them in the last two weeks.

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300 groups of muggers in city active at 500 spots

KAILASH SARKAR

More than 300 groups of muggers have been using around 500 spots in areas under 33 police stations across the capital to mug people with new techniques everyday, according to a Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) research.

DMP already identified 434 of those spots and declared the areas of Sutrapur, Jatrabari, Pallabi, Ramna, Tejgaon, Uttara, and Dhanmondi as the most affected.

The police department also termed mugging as one of the major problems faced by the city residents as well as law enforcers.

On July 29, a night time rickshaw ride of a private university teacher, from Gabtoli to Shahbagh, had him

mugged thrice within a span of 40 minutes.

Like him, hundreds of other city residents are being mugged everyday all over the city.

DMP sources said more than 1,500 uniformed and plainclothes police, drawn from city police stations, the Detective Branch (DB), and from Rajarbagh Police Line based Public Order Management and Special Armed Force units, already have been involved in special drives against mugging in the city since May.

DMP Commissioner Naim Ahmed told The Daily Star yesterday, "In addition to regular patrols, every police station was directed to form at least three motorbike units for patrolling the streets, which has

already started this month, they have also been directed to use firearms if required, in line with the laws."

The DMP commissioner said according to the number of cases filed with police, around 100 muggings take place in the city each month.

But in reality the number is much higher, as most of the victims do not report the incidents to the police while many others just file general diaries only stating that they lost their valuables, in order to ward off legal hassles, he added.

The DMP commissioner said he prepared a 29-point guideline for his force to follow in prevention of mugging, which was distributed among the personnel.

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SLEEPING IN THE AIR! United States' Nastia Liukin performs on the floor during women's individual all-round final of the artistic gymnastics in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games yesterday. Liukin won the gold, her compatriot Shawn Johnson the silver and China's Yilin Yang the bronze.



Overall Medal			
	G	S	B
CHN	26	9	6
USA	14	13	18
GER	8	2	4
KOR	6	9	3

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Six-shooter Phelps

AFP, Beijing

Michael Phelps claimed his sixth Beijing gold and sixth world record as the United States mounted a gold rush on Friday, but the gloss of the Games was tarnished with the first drug failures.

North Korean shooter Kim Jong-Su, who had won a silver and bronze medal, and unplaced Vietnamese gymnast Do Thi Ngan Thuong had both tested positive, the IOC said.

They were the first doping failures in competition since the Games began a week ago.

In an age where superlative performances spark suspicion, Phelps was moved to say his superhuman exploits are achieved fairly. "Anyone can say whatever they want, I know, for me, I am clean," he said after shaving 0.57sec of his own record in winning the 200m

medley.

A day after drawing a golden blank, the United States staged a four-gold blitz, three in world record time in swimming and one in gymnastics, raising spirits after the traditional sporting powerhouse had struggled through the first week.

China picked up two weightlifting and a judo title to have 25 gold medals and the United States are second with 14, nearly half of them from Phelps as he moved within one of Mark Spitz's record seven gold at one Games.

Phelps, whose current career haul of 12 Olympic gold medals is a record in itself, is set to overtake Spitz if he wins his remaining two races -- the 100m butterfly and 4x100m medley relay.

Rebecca Soni, who underwent heart surgery two years ago, started the US run in the pool when she

upset Australia's world champion Leisel Jones to win the 200m breaststroke gold in world record time.

Ryan Lochte followed with a world record win in the men's 200m backstroke and 40 minutes later he was back in the pool to take the bronze medal behind Phelps in the medley.

Britta Steffen broke the US stranglehold taking the women's 100m freestyle crown, and giving Germany their eighth gold to be third on the table.

Track and field opened with the world's three fastest men of all time -- American Tyson Gay and Jamaicans Asafa Powell and Usain Bolt -- cruising through the first round heats of the men's 100m, ahead of Saturday's highly-anticipated final.

Russian-born Nastia Liukin,

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