

Historic March 7

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before a historic gathering at the Race Course Maidan the 'Father of the Nation' delivered the most inspiring diction, "Ebarer sangram amader muktir sangram, ebarer sangram swadhinatar sangram [this movement is for our freedom, this struggle is for our independence]" echoed through the ground and the hearts of 70 million Bangalee people.

In his speech the great leader and orator Sheikh Mujib called for a civil uprising and declared the war against the then Pakistani junta. He said, "Since we have sacrificed blood, we will sacrifice more. We will definitely liberate the country, Inshallah... Turn every house into a fort and counter [the enemy] with whatever you have."

His bold speech stimulated the people from all walks of life to prepare for the Liberation War.

Bangladesh Awami League, its front organisations and different political and socio-cultural organisations have chalked out various programmes to observe the historic March 7 today.

President M Zillur Rahman in a message on the eve of the day urged people to forge unity and work together for building a poverty and hunger free Sonar Bangla as aspired by Bangabandhu.

He said the March 7 is a glorious day in the history of Bangladesh. Responding to Bangabandhu's call the Bangalee nation plunged into the Liberation War, added the president.

In her message to the nation on the occasion of the historic March 7 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the present government formed through a fair, impartial and credible election is committed to eradicate hunger, poverty, exploitation, deprivation and crimes forever.

Assistance is required from everyone, regardless of class and profession, to realise the commitment the way we did responding to Bangabandhu's historic speech on March 7 in 1971, the statement added.

The programmes of Bangladesh Awami League include hoisting the national and party flags at the party central office at 6:00am, offering wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Bhawan at 8:00am, and discussions at Diploma Engineers Institute at 3:00pm.

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote will place wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu at Bangabandhu Bhawan, Dhanmondi at 8:00am.

Acting General Secretary of the party Syed Ashrafur Islam urged all the party units and front organisations to observe the day in a befitting manner.

Water crisis

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rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control while Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) assured them of taking steps for smooth water supply.

An official at Monipur-1 water pump of the Wasa, however, said there is a problem in pumping underground water as the groundwater level has gone down in recent days.

Human chain

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Talking to journalists, they said they demand quick punishment of the perpetrators of the massacre.

Meanwhile, a mourning procession was brought out by the retired army officers in the city demanding immediate arrest and trial of the perpetrators and the mastermind of the mutiny.

Gandhi memorabilia

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Cheers erupted at Antiquorum Auctioneers when the hammer came down on the huge bid by liquor and airline baron Vijay Malloya.

Tony Bedi, who acted on Malloya's behalf, said his client was "bidding for the country" and would take the items back to India.

India had bitterly opposed the auction, insisting that Gandhi's belongings were part of the country's national heritage and that their sale was an insult to the memory of a man who rejected material wealth.

The owner, California-based pacifist James Otis, initially insisted the auction would proceed.

With less than an hour to go, he astonished journalists outside the auction house by announcing that "in light of the controversy" he too wanted the sale stopped.

But he was too late and Antiquorum went ahead.

A fanfare of soft music and a slide show of black and white Gandhi photos introduced the bitterly controversial lot to a packed room.

Then Indian businessmen leapt in, bidding frantically to prevent any foreigner from winning.

Within seconds, Antiquorum's opening price of 20,000 to 30,000 dollars for the

Organizations holding different programmes marking the day include GonoForum, Bangladesh Christian Association, and Kendrio Khelaghar Asar.

Mugger

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local people at about 8:30am when he was fleeing with a cellphone set and cash money from the businessman at gunpoint.

The mob beat the mugger up, killing him on the spot. His identity could not be known yet.

On information, police rushed in and recovered the body. The police sent the body to Mitford Hospital morgue for autopsy.

WB VP due

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Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

During her visit, Guerrero will meet with senior government officials, civil society and the private sector to discuss how the World Bank group could best assist Bangladesh.

In particular, she will address the global financial crisis and its impact on Bangladesh, climate change, regional cooperation, and the infrastructure deficit.

JS security

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The decisions of the meeting include setting up an archway at the entrance to parliament for ensuring security of parliament members, not allowing visitors to enter parliament with cellphones, parking of cars by ministers, MPs and others at designated places, not at the tunnel, and refraining the gunmen of VIPs from entering parliament.

The committee members include Chief Whip Vice Principal Abdus Shahid, the Additional Secretary of Parliament, the Sergeant at Arms and a joint secretary-level official from home ministry and one member each from police headquarters, Rab, SB, SSE, NSF and Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

The next measure would be taken following the recommendations to be submitted by the committee.

Satyam

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the sale will proceed in two phases.

The buyer would first acquire newly issued shares of the company representing 31 percent of its share capital.

The purchaser would then make an open public offer, mandatory under financial market regulations, to acquire another 20 percent of the firm, the statement said, raising its total stake in Satyam to 51 percent.

"Qualified investors are expected to have total net assets in excess of 150 million dollars," a Satyam statement said.

In line with Indian law, a lock-in period of three years will prevent the investor from selling these acquired shares, the regulator said.

Satyam supplies back office services to close to 700 clients including 185 firms ranked in the Fortune 500 in nearly 70 countries around the world.

The sale of India's fourth-largest software services exporter has taken on a sense of urgency with client uncertainty reportedly mounting over the company's future following India's biggest ever corporate fraud.

But it is likely that bidders will demand a discount to cover possible black holes in the balance sheet and liabilities that may arise from lawsuits filed against the company by furious US shareholders, analysts say.

five items rocketed to half a million dollars, and then kept climbing rapidly.

Asked afterward if the possessions of a man who embraced poverty were really worth 1.8 million dollars, white turbaned Bedi laughed: "I think they're worth six" million dollars.

There was still one more twist before Gandhi's passionate followers could breathe easy.

Otis had declared the auction to be illegal and his lawyer had warned of legal action if Antiquorum went ahead.

Antiquorum, which specialized in high-end watch sales, declared a two-week delay in delivering the goods to the auction's highest bidder to address legal questions.

Bedi acknowledged the delicate situation, saying: "Obviously there are some restrictions at the moment pending resolution whether this auction was legal."

But as if Gandhi's spirit of peace was now triumphant, even this potentially nasty legal problem was soon resolved.

Otis explained through his lawyer that his last-minute opposition to the auction had been because he feared that someone unsuitable, like a foreign dictator, would win.

Malloya's promise to repatriate the items resolved that worry.

Grilling on

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information about the bloody revolt staged by disgruntled border troops.

In another development, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka yesterday placed BDR cook Amirul Islam on a five-day remand. Investigation Officer and ASP Abdul Kahar Akand of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) produced Amirul before the court and sought 10 days' remand.

With the cook's arrest at Pilkhana Thursday, the number of people rounded up in the case filed with Lalbagh Police Station stands at 28.

Meanwhile, as the hunt for rebels and firearms missing from the BDR headquarters continued across the country, a pistol and 42 rounds of bullets meant for government use were recovered from the city's Shahbagh area yesterday morning.

At Pilkhana, two pistols and 200 bullets of rifle were recovered during a search yesterday.

Locals found the small gun and ammunition beside a drain at Shivbari and informed the police. Police suspect those had been dumped by fleeing mutineers.

Abdul Kahar Akand yesterday said there has been some progress in their investigation into the Pilkhana butchery. He said he hopes they will be able to submit their report soon.

Talking to The Daily Star, he said, "We have almost finished the work of gathering evidence."

According to sources in the law enforcement agencies, CID is now working to detect offenders through fingerprints on the firearms, helmets, belts, nameplates and uniforms they left before fleeing the scene.

Intelligence agencies and probe committees are working in coordination to help CID come up with a watertight charge sheet after investigation.

Pakistan

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involvement in the attack.

"We have not found any leads suggesting the involvement of any religious elements," Malik said.

But he refused to divulge information about how the probe was progressing. Up to 12 men attacked the convoy of officials, coaches and players, firing automatic weapons, grenades and a rocket launcher as the vehicles approached Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Tuesday. All the attackers fled without trace.

No one has claimed responsibility for the assault.

2 BDR jawans

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The BDR jawans are Subedar Shah Jahan Ali (No. 5208), and Habildar Khalequzzaman (No. 44388) of 41 rifles battalion.

Sources said they went to BDR headquarters to receive medals.

Contacted, Lt. Col. Zillur Hakim of Operation Rebel Hunt in Sathkira confirmed the incident and said they were not shown arrest but sent for interrogation.

Our correspondent from Thakurgaon reports: A BDR jawan was held Thursday night around 10:30pm when he came to surrender at Thakurgaon Police Station.

The arrestee is Moazzam Haque, 28, (Batch No. 68058) son of late Abdul Sheikh of Lauthuli village under sadar upazila in Thakurgaon.

Officer in Charge (OC) of Thakurgaon Police Station Mahbubul Islam said he was a jawan of 26 rifles battalion in Rangamati BDR camp. He went to Pilkhana BDR headquarters to participate in Tattu show on 8 January 2009. He fled from the headquarters February 25 after the mutiny.

As the deadline for surrender expired police arrested him under section-54 and sent him to Thakurgaon jail yesterday. The arrestee will be produced before the Chief Judicial Magistrate Court on Sunday, OC said.

Bird flu

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Upazila Parishad Complex.

"The government has been alert enough this season to monitor bird flu cases. Wherever any bird flu virus is detected, authorities are taking measures to check its outbreak," said Dr Giasuddin, chief scientific officer at Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute.

The government with assistance from the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has employed field volunteers since October 2008 to strengthen surveillance of bird flu in rural areas, he said.

According to the official website, the government found the presence of the H5N1 virus at 308 farms in 47 districts and culled chickens of 568 farms until March 3.

Outbreaks of the virus generally occur after the end of the rains in October and continue until early June when the rains return.

Four hundred and eight confirmed cases of bird flu patients worldwide have been reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO) since 2003. Of these, at least 254 had died as of 18 February 2009. Most of them had close contact with sick birds.

Hoardings in Ctg

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rent and defying a court injunction against reinstalling the hoardings.

Mohiuddin Bachchu claimed that the hoardings were not removed and they only lacked advertisement. "The plates now being re-fixed had been removed as the frame size of the hoardings needed to be reduced," he said.

He admitted that the firm's licences were valid till July, 2008, and they were preparing to renew them for the current fiscal year.

Richi Arts resumed erection work of the hoarding in Dewanhat overpass taking permission from the railway PR section.

The concerned official of railway PR section could not give any satisfactory answer as to why they allowed reinstallation of removed hoardings.

Relation Ad started installing the new billboards at Sholoshahar Graveyard, sources said.

Relation Ad and Green-valley, however, had taken permission from the president of Railway Scouts and superintendent of Government Railway Police, who has possession of the leased out railway land, when the railway PR section was the legitimate authority for allowing hoardings to be built on railway land, claimed officials of the PR section.

Munir Ahmed of Relation Ad said, "We have taken permission for the hoardings from Railway Scout knowing them to be legitimate authority."

"We are to inform the CCC only after the hoarding has advertisement," he claimed.

According to sources, the CCC gives permission for illuminated hoardings along city streets for an annual rent of Tk 100 per square foot and Tk 50 per square foot for non-illuminated ones.

The CCC charges Tk 50 per square foot for illuminated hoardings and Tk 25 per square foot for non-illuminated hoardings on land or buildings belonging to other organisations or individuals. So there was no scope to erect any hoarding in the city keeping the CCC in the dark.

CCC Revenue Officer Shamsul Haq said, "None of the advertising firms informed the CCC about their reinstallation work when a number of them had a huge amount of hoarding tax unpaid and licences yet to be renewed."

"We could not pull down the structures of some hoardings due to court injunction," he said, adding, "If any billboard is reinstalled illegally or

in violation of hoarding conditions, we will take steps to remove it."

There are allegations that the CCC is allowing hoardings to be erected violating the 13 conditions set in this regard.

The conditions prevent installation of hoardings and signboards that might hamper public or vehicular movement, harm the beauty of structures or nature, block the sun or flow of air or hamper growth of neighbouring plants.

The conditions are hardly followed and the CCC revenue department allows installation of signboards without proper inspection of the sites, an allegation CCC officials concerned conceded.

Onion, sugar

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from Tk 12-14 of two days ago. In wholesale, the price was between Tk 12 and Tk 13 per kg yesterday.

Wholesalers blamed farmers and traders of potatoes for hoarding and the price hike.

Meanwhile, sugar prices went up to Tk 35-36 a kg during the last two days, arise of Tk 1.

Rajshahi cops

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"As per rules, the home ministry's permission is essential for lodging cases with seditious charges," said the DIG.

Expressing solidarity with the Pilkhana mutineers, the soldiers in different northern regions, including four battalions in Rajshahi, Naogaon and Chapainawabganj districts, fired hundreds of shots and put barricades on roads on February 25 and 26 in order to destabilise the country, police said.

Jamiruddin, a 35-year old rickshaw puller, was shot on February 26 as the BDR soldiers began firing at Shalbagh sector headquarters. BDR member Nazrul Islam received bullet wounds at Chapainawabganj battalion headquarters during the mutiny.

M Shahabuddin Khan, superintendent of police in Rajshahi, informed that they sought home ministry's permission to file two cases with Puthia and Godagari police stations.

Two other cases will be lodged at Boalia and Rajpara police stations under Rajshahi city following the mutiny at sector and battalion headquarters at Shalbagh under Boalia thana and Majardia Border Outpost under Rajpara thana, police said.

Similar cases are likely to be filed with police stations at Naogaon, Chapainawabganj, Nilphamari, Thakurgaon and Joypurhat.

Electric 3-wheelers

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cheap to buy and run, sales of the three-wheelers picked up despite confusion over its legal status.

Many drivers of the vehicles also do not have any sort of licence.

Rafiqul Islam, director (engineering) of BRTA said, "We have authority over all motorised vehicles on land but this particular three-wheeler type is neither completely motorised nor non-motorised. The Motor Vehicle Ordinance, 1983, has no specific definition or clause regarding electric vehicles.

"We fix registration fees or road taxes depending on the vehicles category. Without defining its type we cannot do anything," he added.

The electric three-wheelers are popularly known as Borak, E-Bike, Easy Bike, City Bike, etc. It is also being called China Rickshaw.

The vehicles are now being used in 17 districts. Municipality offices outside Dhaka are providing registration for the vehicles and licences to drivers. The ones in the capital are running without any documentation.

According to assemblers of the vehicles, there are roughly 5,000 electric three-wheelers in the country. There is no official estimate.

Meanwhile, the DCC, responsible for licensing non-motorised vehicles in the city is considering replacing human-powered rickshaws with the electric three-wheelers. A committee comprising officials of BRTA, Roads and Highways Department and the DCC has been set up to examine its feasibility.

Head of the committee BM Enamul Haque, general manager (transport) of the DCC, said, "These vehicles can provide employment to a lot of people. A proposal has been sent to the LGED [Local

BSF kills 1 in Tentulia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

One Bangladeshi cattle trader was killed when Indian Security Force (BSF) opened fire on a group of traders at Kirtanpara under Tetulia upazila in Panchagarh early yesterday.

The deceased was Shamul, 40, son of late Tamizuddin of Joyganj under Tetulia upazila of the district.

Around 1:00am BSF personnel of Madanbari camp shot at least six to eight rounds at the group, said Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sources and the chairman of Debnagar union.

Sources said the incident took place as the traders reached near the pillar (no. 739/R-17) to purchase cattle from India. Shamul died instantly while others managed to escape unhurt.

After the incident the Indian border guards took the body to India. BDR strongly protested the killing and asked its Indian counterpart to return the body.

Company Commander of Bhitupukur BDR camp sent a proposal for a flag meeting and in response around 7:00pm the BSF agreed to hold the meeting at 12:00 noon today.

UZ law

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meeting on Thursday agreed in principle to make MPs as advisers. Asked about this, Dr Tofael Ahmed, member of the defunct local government commission, said MPs can have a role in upazila parishad even if the provision is not included in law.

If the law provides for involvement of lawmakers with upazila parishad, then MPs elected from city corporation areas can also demand ensuring their involvement with city corporations, he said.

He suggested considering all these matters from a comprehensive point of view in the interest of a healthy local government system.

Prof Sajahuddin M. Aminuzzaman of Dhaka University said conflict between lawmakers and upazila chairmen is inevitable as the MPs will try to interfere in the activities of chairmen, who are empowered to carry out development work using funds allocated for upazila parishad.

He noted that municipality would be in a better position as none will be adviser to it.

He said as a local government body, upazila parishad is more important than municipality.

On the proposed involvement of MPs with upazila parishad, Dr Shahdeen Malik said this will not be good for the parishad.

"Most importantly, Article 59 of the constitution does not envisage role in local government for any other elected representatives except those who are elected for the local authority," he said.

"By analogy, if there have to be roles for MPs in all other elected local bodies that is, union parishad, zila parishad, municipality and city corporation, this clearly will jeopardise the functioning of local authority and distract MPs from performing their main responsibilities in parliament," said the renowned lawyer when contacted.

On the MPs from city corporation areas, who will not be involved with the local government body, he said, "It will divide the lawmakers who have a role in local government and who have not, and will create discord among them."

Woman's body

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On information, police came to the spot and recovered the body of a woman aged around 30. Identity of the victim could not be known.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Airport Police Station Sirajul Islam said the victim's hands and legs were tied with strings and mouth tied with cloth. She might have been killed somewhere else with the body left at the terminal building early in the morning.

They will examine video footages of close circuit television cameras installed at the airport to track down the killers, he added.

Meanwhile, a police official seeking anonymity said the incident shows lapses in security at the airport.

Power outages

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not the government take necessary steps to ease the ongoing power crisis?" he said.

The examinees of ongoing Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations are bearing the brunt of the crisis.

"Power is out for over an hour each time hampering my studies seriously. It is out intermittently after evenings," complained an SSC examinee in Farmgate area.

Frequent power cuts is also interrupting smooth water supply in many parts of the city. People of Senpara Parbata in the capital's Mirpur area yesterday barricaded a roads demanding uninterrupted water supply.

Irrigation for boro crops across the country is also being hampered due to shortage of power even though about 1,000MW of power is being used for irrigation every day. The treasury bench lawmakers Thursday discussed the issue in parliament and demanded uninterrupted supply of electricity to farmers.

About 3,282MW of power was generated in the country yesterday against a demand of 4,200MW. Around 600MW power could not be generated due to poor gas supply to many power plants, sources say.

Yesterday around 1,150MW of power was supplied to the capital against an approximate demand of 1,600MW during peak hours, sources said.

"This situation could have been better if only we could ensure adequate gas supply to power plants," says a PDB official.

Power plants are sitting idle due to shortage of gas supply and the load-shedding could be lessened if the idle plants could generate 600MW more, he added.

According to the Met office, the city has been experiencing over 30 degrees Celsius temperature over the last week. Dhaka saw a high of 34.2 degrees Celsius yesterday while the highest temperature of the country was recorded in Jessore, 35.2. The highest temperature of Dhaka in the week was 34.4 on Thursday.

The government's initiatives, including closure of shops after 8:00pm and asking private institutions to have their week-ends sometime other than the government weekend, seems inadequate to improve the power situation.

Frequent power outages have been reported from almost all parts of the city. In Nilkhet, lights went out five times yesterday for more than an hour each time.

"Power is out four to five times a day in our area for at least an hour each time," alleges Farzana Mahbuba, a resident of Nilkhet.

However, she experienced eight power cuts between 8:00am and 1:00pm yesterday, each outage lasting 20-30 minutes. She apprehends that the situation will worsen in the next few months when the mercury rises even further.

Residents of Dhanmondi, Kalabagan, Moghbazar, Khilgaon, Goran, Shahjahanpur, Mohammadpur, Uttara and other places in the capital are also experiencing frequent power cuts lasting more than an hour.

PDB sources say that about 838MW of power is not being generated in different power plants due to their routine maintenance.

They say the Raosan Power Plant is producing 90MW to 100MW. It has the capacity to generate 350MW of power.

Kapital power plant is producing 90MW of power even though its capacity is 230MW. The plant is unable to generate more power due to low water level in Kaptai Lake.

They apprehend the power demand may shoot up to 5,000MW during May-June. Last year the demand reached 4,748MW during that period.

GASSHORTAGE

Different power plants across

the country are already failing to produce 550MW to 700MW of power due to non-availability or low pressure of gas.

According to Petrobangla sources, over the years demand for gas went up beyond the capacity of the existing gas delivery system. Petrobangla is now delivering more than 1,800 million cubic feet of gas a day while it believes the demand is hovering between 1,900 and 2,000 million cubic feet of gas a day.

The 1,800 million cubic feet of gas is not being supplied at optimal pressure.