

In tears, they mourn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Rifles and Rapid Action Battalion yesterday observed with a heavy heart the first death anniversary of the martyrs of the Pilkhana carnage.
 To mark the day that witnessed massacre of 74 people including 57 army officers by a group of disgruntled BDR personnel, the army and BDR placed floral wreaths at the army graveyard at Banani at 9:00am. They prayed for the departed souls.
 Family members of the deceased army officers attended the sedate occasion.
 Wreaths were placed on behalf of President Zillur Rahman and Premier Sheikh Hasina.
 Assistant Military Secretary to President Lt Col Md Zakir Hossain and Brig Gen Md Salahuddin Miaji represented the president

High-ranking officers of the army cannot lock their soft inner side yesterday after offering prayers at Banani army graveyard for the colleagues they lost during BDR mutiny a year ago.
SEE MOURNING IN FRAME FOR MORE PHOTOS
PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



BNP doubts fair trial prospect

Questions role of PM, Moeen
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 BNP leaders yesterday said the roles played by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and former army chief Moeen U Ahmed during the BDR mutiny last year were questionable.
 They blamed the prime minister, ruling party leaders and a neighbouring country for the incident and said BNP would ensure punishment of real conspirators if the party were voted to power again.
 Expressing doubt over the fair trial in BDR court, they also rejected the recent remark of BDR Director General Maj Gen Moinul Islam that much talked Daal-Bhaat programme was the main reason behind the mutiny.
 They were addressing a condolence meeting organised by the party at the city's

'Daal-Bhaat' no real reason

Wife of Col Mojib wants to know the actual motive behind such brutal killing
SHARIFUL ISLAM
 It's been a year since Col Mojibul Haque was brutally killed in the bloody mutiny at Pilkhana BDR Headquarters. But his wife Neheerun Ferdousi seemed to be in a trance and was hoping her husband was posted somewhere and would return anytime.
 After an agonising year of hope, she finally realises the harsh reality that he will never return.



Late Col Mojibul Haque

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One bullet ruined lives of seven

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK
 Just one bullet ruins seven lives.
 A year ago during the bloody mutiny in BDR headquarters at Pilkhana, a bullet snatched the life of rickshaw-puller Amzad Ali and it made the life of his wife and six children a mess.
 Forty-five-year-old Amzad was the only breadwinner of the family and he had dreamt of educating his children for a better life.
 "His prime dream was to bring the children up as educated persons to change the fate of being the child of a rickshaw puller," said Rashida Begum, Amzad's 38-year-old widow.
 But the big contrast is that Amzad's death compelled his 17-year-old son Moslem to give up studying. Moslem was student of class-VI when his father died last year. He had started school late.
 "I had to give up my studies because no one else can earn for the family," said Moslem, continuing to express his deep frustration, "I wished to find a good job, but as it requires further studies, now I realise it will not be possible for me."



Amzad's 38-year-old widow Rashida Begum tells The Daily Star, "His [Amzad's] prime dream was to bring the children up as educated persons to change the fate of being the child of a rickshaw puller."

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GAZIPUR SWEATER FACTORY CATCHES FIRE

21 die from suffocation

At least 30 injured; electric short circuit thought to be a reason
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 At least 21 garment workers, including 15 women, died from smoke inhalation in a fire at a sweater factory in Bhogra of Gazipur last night.
 Majeda, 30, Jarina, 45, Farida, 25, and Mainul, 30, were among the dead. Others could not be identified immediately.
 The fire broke out around 9:10pm on the first floor of Garib & Garib sweater factory near Gazipur Chowrasta. Panicked workers rushed to the upper floors to escape the flames and a number of them died of smoke inhalation there, fire brigade sources said.
 Hospital sources said 11 people were declared dead at Gazipur Sadar Hospital, seven at Tongi Health complex and three were declared dead at Tairunnesa Memorial Medical College Hospital in Gazipur.
 The fire left another 30 people injured. A few of them were reported to be in critical condition. The wounded were rushed to different hospitals in the district.
 Abdur Rashid, deputy director of Fire Service and Civil Defence (Dhaka division), told The Daily Star that the fire broke out on the first floor of the seven-storey building but it did not spread to other floors. A huge amount of smoke caused the deaths, he added.
 "We rescued 22 injured, many of whom were unconscious. Some of the workers were bleeding from the nose," Rashid said.
 Fire fighters could not say for sure what caused the fire but they mentioned that a short circuit could be the reason. Eleven fire engines rushed to the spot and doused the flame around 11:30pm and six ambulances were used in rescue operations, fire brigade sources said.
 "The fire-fighters dealt with the fire dividing themselves into two teams. One team was engaged to douse the flames while another started rescuing people," Rashid said.
 They rescued 19 people from the sixth floor and three from the staircase of fifth floor. All of them were unconscious, he said.
 He said the fire extinguishing equipment at the factory were not adequate in comparison with the size of the building.
 Sub-Inspector of Joydevpur Police Station Saidur Rahman told The Daily Star

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Joy joins politics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 Sajeeb Wazed Joy, son of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, joined Awami League as a primary member in Rangpur yesterday.
 Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbul Alam Hanif told The Daily Star that he handed over Joy's membership form to the

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TANNERY RELOCATION DEADLINE

Owners, govt go to court for time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 The government and tannery-owners yesterday explained to the High Court their reasons for not having taken any steps to relocate the tanneries from the city's Hazaribagh area.
 They placed their statements mentioning the reasons including money and rehabilitation problems and sought at least two-year time for implementation of the HC directives, sources said.
 Justice Md Mamtaz Uddin Ahmed and Justice Naima Haider fixed February 28 for passing order on the issue.
 Earlier in June last year, the court directed the government and tannery-owners to relocate the tanneries to Savar or close them down by February 28 this year, aiming to control the

massive scale environmental pollution the industry is causing.
 The court also ordered the government to make sure that all industries install effluent treatment plants (ETPs) and other pollution-fighting devices by June this year and provide the authorities concerned with sufficient logistics and police forces to close the eco-unfriendly industries.
 A bench of HC delivered the order upon the petitions filed by Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (Bela) and Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB).
 However, the lawyers said the tannery owners have to expense over Tk 6 crore for relocation as per the earlier HC verdict.
 Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh on

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The raging fire at Garib & Garib sweater factory near Gazipur Chowrasta.

PHOTO: STAR

Electricity tariff goes up from March

BSS, Dhaka
 Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) is set to increase the power tariff by 3 to 5 percent at the retail level from March 1.
 Officials of the commission told BSS yesterday that the power tariff would be increased by 3 to 5 percent at the retail level for all electricity distributing agencies.
 The distributing agencies include Dhaka Power Distribution Company (DPDC), Dhaka Electric Supply Company Limited (Desco), Rural Electrification Board (Reb), West Zone Power Distribution Company (WZPDCO) and The Power Development Board (PDB).

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Experience must to open medical college

Govt modifying its policy
ALPHA ARZU
 No institution or individual will be allowed to establish a private medical college without two years' experience in running a hospital, according to a policy modification on setting up private medical colleges.
 "We have brought some major changes in the set-up criteria for private medical college to improve the standard of medical education," said Prof Khandakar M Sefayet Ullah, director of medical education of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).
 The modified criteria stated that a private medical college would not have an approval unless it has two years' experience in running a full-fledged general hospital. The ratio for students' seats and bed should be 1:5, which implies that if anyone applies for a 50-seat medical college they have to have a 250-bed hospital.
 Most of the private medical colleges were established without functioning hospitals and that is why the government has planned to make it mandatory to have hospital operating experience, said the medical education head.
 The government will also be strict about the provision of poor students' opportunity at these colleges as the authorities frequently violate the policy of keeping 5% of total seats for poor students who should be allowed to pay fees equivalent to public medical colleges.
 According to the medical education policy approved in 2004, the teachers and employees of the colleges have to be authenticated by the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council.
 As per the new rule, no private medical college can be established in a rented facility. A 50-seat medical college must have its own building on 2.5 acres of land or one lakh square feet of space in metropolitan areas while five acres outside the metropolises.
 The institutions will have to have one

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