

Bhutanese King visits Bangabandhu Museum

BSS, Dhaka

Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck visited Bangabandhu Memorial Museum and the Liberation War Museum in the city yesterday as he passed the second day of his five-day official visit to Bangladesh.

The 31-year-old King, who took office from his father King Jigme Singhe Wangchuk formally in 2008, arrived in Dhaka for the first time and paid rich tributes to the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the freedom fighters of the country.

Bhutan is the first country that gave official recognition to Bangladesh as an independent country on December 3, 1971.

King Jigme Khesar started his day's programme with the visit of Bangabandhu Museum, placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu, stood in solemn silence for a minute and saw the picture of Bangabandhu as his eyes were full of deep respect to the great leader.

His father King Jigme Singhe Wangchuk met Bangabandhu in 1974 as Bangladesh invited him for state visit during that time. He had also two other visits in Dhaka in 1984 and 1985, the year Saarc held its first meeting in Dhaka.

The Bhutanese King, who was accompanied by Bangladesh Food Minister Abdur Razzaque, were shown all historic remnants and pictures of Bangabandhu, his family members, war heroes and historic events at ground floor before King Khesar was taken to staircase, where Bangabandhu was brutally killed in a pre-dawn military coup on August 15, 1975.

The King then was taken to the floor of the two-storied building and was shown Bangabandhu's simple style of living, which a Bhutanese delegate, compared with the very simple lifestyle of Bhutan's 4th King Jigme Singhe Wangchuk, father of incumbent King Khesar.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks to Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck during a courtesy call at Sonargaon Hotel in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 20)

PHOTO: PID

Pakistan must apologise for 1971 atrocities

Says Imran Khan

BSS, Dhaka

Pakistani cricket legend Imran Khan has said his country must apologise for the 1971 atrocities its troops carried out on Bengalis as he joined overnight a TV talk show in Geo Television.

"Yes, yes, yes... We must apologise," Khan said as anchor of the show reputed journalist Hamid Mir asked him if he thought this was time for Pakistan government to seek apology of Bangladeshis for the atrocities committed by "our Army in 1971."

"That (1971) operation was a blunder. We must apologise," he added.

The legendary cricketer called Pakistani operations "a blunder" and "we must learn lesson from our past mistakes (and) stop operations in Baluchistan and Fata areas."

Khan comments came as Bangladesh is set to observe the 40th Independence anniversary today amid a protracted demand seeking an official Pakistani apology for the 1971 atrocities by their army.

Contacted for the background of the talk show in Pakistan's Geo TV on Wednesday night, Mir said they discussed politics and 1971 just for few minutes as the show was focused on Pakistan-West Indies match in Dhaka's Mirpur Stadium.

But, he said, Khan's comments drew massive appreciation from both the younger and older Pakistanis who thanked him for the question while The News International newspaper Thursday carried a report on the issue.

Fakhrul blames Col Taher for 'killing' army men in 1975

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday blamed Col Taher for the killings of 60 army officials in 1975.

Addressing a discussion at the Engineers Institution Auditorium in Dhaka, the BNP leader also said the government wants to use foreigners, like journalist Lawrence Lifschultz, to portray late president Ziaur Rahman as a villain; but people will not accept it.

Party standing committee members Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Moudud Ahmed and MK Anwar, Vice-Chairman Abdullah Al Noman also spoke at the meeting with Nazrul Islam Khan chairing it.

Mosharraf said BNP will respond appropriately if anyone makes derogatory remarks against Ziaur Rahman. He said legal actions would be taken if necessary.

Events held on eve of Independence Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different government, non-government, socio-cultural and political organisations yesterday organised various programmes in the city on the eve of the 40th Independence Day to be observed today.

Kendriya Khelaghar Asar, an organisation of children and youths, held a children's rally at Jatya Press Club in the city demanding arrest of Ghulam Azam and speeding up the trial of war criminals.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique at the function said those who distorted the history of the War of Liberation should be identified and brought to justice.

Members of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, an organisation of cultural activists, performed different cultural events on Central Shaheed Minar premises.

Beer Bangalee, an organisation of some DU students,

30 fall sick taking lunch at conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 30 people fell sick after taking meal at a convention centre at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.

Fifteen were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) while others to private clinics.

DMCH doctors said all of them got diarrhoea, and were vomiting frequently.

Nearly 700 employees of Alco Pharma Limited from different districts attended a conference at Marriott Convention Centre. Some of them fell ill after having their lunch around 1:30pm.

Victim Asif Anwar, senior medical promotion officer of the company, at DMCH alleged the authorities of the convention centre served them contaminated food.

Marriott officials, however, denied the allegation.

NEWS IN brief

'Truth unveiled by Col Taher verdict'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Col Taher Sangsad yesterday expressed satisfaction over the High Court verdict on March 22 that declared unlawful and unconstitutional the trial of Col Abu Taher in 1976.

The association at a meeting in the city said the truth has come out even after 35 years through the HC that also ordered to term Taher a patriot and consider him a martyr.

Justice Mohammad Gholam Rabbani chaired the meeting attended by Col Taher Sangsad vice president Haidar Akbar Khan Rano, general secretary Mohammad Ali, joint general secretary Bina Sikdar, organising secretary Manirul Islam, and Prof Anwar Hossain.

Events at Liberation War Museum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liberation War Museum is holding different programmes today marking its fifteenth founding anniversary, which was on March 22.

Cultural programme of children and adolescents will be held at the museum premises at 9:00am, followed by a "Muktijuddher Chitrakon Camp" participated by prominent artists at 3:00pm.

A cultural programme will also be held at Jalladkhana in Mirpur section-10 at 4:30pm.

Biman resumes Ctg-Bangkok flight tomorrow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Biman Bangladesh Airlines resumes its Chittagong-Bangkok-Chittagong flights from tomorrow.

Biman's Junior Flight Officer Nuruzzaman said the flights were cancelled from November 28 of 2008 for losses incurring due to global recession.

Biman sources said the 160-seat capacity Boeing 737-800 would fly every Sunday and Wednesday.

lit candles at the base of Buddhijibi Chatter on DU campus.

Projonmo-71 held a discussion at Jatya Press Club in the city demanding arrest of Ghulam Azam and speeding up the trial of war criminals.



Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee light torches on Central Shaheed Minar premises in the city yesterday recalling memories of innocent people murdered on the black night of March 25, 1971 by the Pakistani army and their local collaborators.

PHOTO: STAR



Workers dig at a mass grave at Patharghata Iqbal Road in Chittagong yesterday, which was found by the investigation team of International Crimes Tribunal.

PHOTO: STAR

Arab unrest may affect economy

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plants, he said, adding that any deficiency in foreign exchange would lead to devaluation of taka, which could further cause problems in the country's economy.

According to the Bangladesh Bank, remittance growth was 2.62 percent in 2010, which in the last few years hovered between 15 and 30 percent. This decline is attributed mainly to the global economic recession, but analysts fear the Arab unrest may worsen the situation.

Even though Bangladesh's major labour markets -- the UAE and Saudi Arabia hosting around 40 lakh migrants -- are still peaceful, there are reasons to worry.

In Saudi Arabia, demonstrators took to the streets over creation of a constitutional monarchy prompting the government to ban any protests.

In a major move to cut its

reliance on foreign workers in the private sector, Saudi Arabia has announced plans to raise the number of employed Saudi citizens from current 3.9 million to 5.04 million within two years, reports the Arab News.

In the UAE, a group of Emirati activists and intellectuals have sent a petition to the president, urging him to allow direct elections and grant legislative power to parliament.

Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Yemen, Iraq, Iran, Mauritania, Morocco, Syria and Sudan are also witnessing pro-democracy demonstrations in the wake of popular uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia.

"The rest of the Arab nations follow what Egypt does," said political analyst Dr Imtiaz Ahmed, also a professor of international relations at Dhaka University.

He said democracy in the Arab world would be good, also for the migrant populations' rights, but it might take a long time. Therefore, labour migration to these countries from Bangladesh could be hampered seriously if the movement of such nature continues or deepens.

The Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit Executive Director Dr CR Abrar said Libya was a prospective labour market for Bangladesh, adding, the government has been planning to set up training centres and sending more workforces there.

"Instead, those already recruited in Libya are returning. This is going to affect remittance from Libya very negatively," he told The Daily Star.

Bangladeshis from Libya sent home \$1.46 million in the fiscal year of 2009-10.

Bangladesh's business community and economists term the situation a national crisis. At a recent meeting of the FBCCI, they expressed concern about rehabilitation of those affected by the Libyan turmoil.

Harun Al Rashid, coordinator of CARAMASIA, a Kuala Lumpur-based regional body for Asian migrants, said the government should build an intelligence base on what is happening in the major labour destination countries.

Something like a taskforce comprised of Bangladeshi professionals abroad and government officials and academics should gather information and suggest how to ensure the migrants' rights in any situation.

"In case of instability, the workers can be relocated to temporary shelters instead of wholesale evacuation," Rashid told The Daily Star.

WAR CRIMES TRIAL 3-day probe ends in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Investigation team of International Crimes Tribunal concluded their three-day long probe in Chittagong yesterday.

Led by Assistant Superintendent of Police Monawara Begum, the team investigated incidents of affliction on women there by war criminals during the War of Liberation.

"Study and inspection on this issue continues across the country for one month and in this phase, many clues, data and important indications were collected," said Advocate Rana Dasgupta, the team's prosecution member.

Details of findings would not be given at present for the sake of the investigation, he added.

MP Anne hurt in road crash

UNB, Comilla

BNP leader and lawmaker Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Anne sustained slight injuries in an accident on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Shahidnagar in Daudkandi upazila yesterday.

Al Amin, personal assistant of Anne, said a jeep carrying Anne suddenly turned inoperative and it skidded off the road while it was being pushed on the roadside at about 10:00am.

Anne's elder brother Happy, driver Mujibur and body guard Dulal were also injured.

Muggers stab three

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers stabbed three people including a street beggar and snatched Tk 53,000 in total and two cell phones in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

A group of three muggers snatched a street beggar's savings Tk 3000 in broad daylight and stabbed him indiscriminately while he was bagging in Doyel Chattar area on Dhaka University campus.

The handicapped beggar Sagor Hawlader, 32, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital following the incident.

Meanwhile, in another snatching incident a group of 5-6 muggers stabbed Mohammad Mamun, 17, a schoolboy, and took away Tk 50 thousand and a cell phone from his possession at Mirpur.

He was carrying the money to his uncle to send his elder brother abroad.

In another incident, muggers stabbed Saddam Hossain, 18, a shop employee, and snatched away his cell phone in Donia Graveyard area.

He was admitted to DMCH with several stab injuries.

49 students win nat'l science olympiad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty-nine students of secondary and higher secondary levels from across the country won the National Science Olympiad yesterday, achieving topmost scores in the contest.

The top students, 25 from secondary level and 24 from higher secondary level, are named as the best of 500 best students who were selected from divisional Science Olympiads.

Faisal Bin Kashem of Chittagong Government High School and Kazi Javed of Notre Dame College became the champions at the secondary and higher secondary levels.

The participants were provided with a set of multiple-choice questions on biology, physics, chemistry, and mathematics to answer in the daylong contest held at Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University in the city.

With a view to popularising science education among youths, Bangladesh Academy of Sciences (BAS) organised the National Science Olympiad 2011.

Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University Vice Chancellor Prof Shah-E-Alam distributed prizes as the chief guest among the successful students.

BAS President Prof Shamsheer Ali, Prof AM Harun-or-Rashid of Dhaka University, BAS Secretary Prof Naiyyum Chowdhury, and BAS Associate Secretary Prof Mohammad Kaykobad were present at the prize giving ceremony.

DU Jagannath Hall observes black night

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six-year-old Anima came to Jagannath Hall in Dhaka University (DU) last night with her father to see the brutality committed by the Pakistani army and their local collaborators on the black night of March 25, 1971.

What she saw were not the real horrors but replicas created by the hall authorities to recall the memories of innocent people murdered on that night and let common people get a sense of the brutality.

Like past years, Jagannath Hall authorities decorated the premises, which include lighting a mass grave there with candles.

Hundreds of DU students paid their tributes by lighting candles on the mass grave and raised demand for a quick trial of war criminals.

"We observe this black night of March 25 so that no nation has to face such a night," said DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique.

Through the programmes, he said, the institution recalls memories of its veteran teachers, students and employees murdered on this night and expresses hatred towards the killing.

Addressing the function there, State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku urged people to unite against anti-liberation war forces, stating that they are still active.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni assured of trial of local collaborators of the Pakistani army.

Journalist Shahriar Kabir demanded March 25 be declared international genocide day.