



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

The cleaning work is going on at Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial at Mirpur in the city yesterday ahead of Martyred Intellectuals' Day on December 14.

PADMA BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION Govt must begin work in its tenure to avoid failure Says communications minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It would be a failure for the government if the construction of the Padma bridge, its electoral pledge, does not begin before its tenure ends, said the newly appointed Communications Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday.

He asked the Bridge Division officials to immediately repair Kanchpur, Meghna and Gomoti bridges as the structure of those are in a poor state. Of them, Meghna bridge might collapse anytime, he added.

The minister was addressing the officials during a visit to the Shetu Bhaban, a wing of his ministry, in the morning. He also directed the officials to quickly repair the cracks on the Bangabandhu Bridge.

Later, Obaidul went to Sarak Bhaban for the first time since his appointment as the minister where several hundred Roads and Highways Department employees were standing with bouquets at the main entrance and his office since morning to receive him.

Apparently fed up with the receptions and stream of visitors, he warned RHD staff not to

be more of an Awami Leaguer than him.

"I am here as a minister of the government, not as an Awami League leader. Do not mix up the party and the government. Those doing politics of my party can visit me at my house. Do politics but do not be partisan," he told.

A number of ruling Awami League loyalists and activists of RHD Sramik Union, Jatiya Sramik League, Diploma Engineers Association, Drivers' Association and Dhaka Sarak Sramik League also gathered to greet Obaidul.

At one stage, the minister told the crowd, "I did not come here to get flowers or a reception. I came here to work and to give you some instructions."

He said the government would place importance on maintenance of the existing road network to make them operational rather than construction of new roads. "We do not have enough time but we will put in extra effort to lessen people's sufferings."

He said upgrading the Dhaka-Chittagong highway into four lanes would be the top priority.

LONG MARCH AGAINST TIPAI DAM Ershad vows to continue movement

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY, from Zakiganj

Jatiya Party's long march protesting the Indian government's move to construct the controversial Tipaimukh dam on the Barak river in its northeastern Manipur state concluded yesterday with a vow to continue the movement.

"The movement does not end here. It is the beginning of our movement against the Indian government's initiative to build the Tipaimukh dam which would seriously threaten our environment," said Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad.

He was addressing several thousand people at the concluding rally of the two-day-long programme at Zakiganj Government Boy's High School playground.

Ershad arrived in the frontier Zakiganj upazila with his entourage riding in around 1,000 vehicles from Sylhet Alia Madrasa premises.

JP, a key component of the Awami League-led grand alliance, started the long march towards Sylhet from Dhaka on Saturday.

Ershad said, "We will raise the Tipaimukh dam issue everywhere. We will tell that India betrayed us. If necessary, we will sacrifice our lives to prevent the dam's construction." He said the Indian prime minister did not keep the promise he made during his recent Bangladesh visit that India would not do anything which will harm Bangladesh.

Termining the Tipaimukh issue a "national problem", he urged all political parties to jointly protest the Indian move. "It is not the time to create differences. Let us work together to find a solution."

He urged Bangladesh's prime minister to prevent the dam's construction through discussions with the Indian side.

However, JP Presidium Member Kazi Zafar Ahmed claimed that India took the initiative after "silent support" from Bangladesh's prime minister and the government.

"Jatiya Party should leave the grand alliance if the government fails to settle the matter," he said, adding that Ershad, if assigned, could solve the matter in three months.

JP Secretary General Ruhul Amin Howlader, presidium members Anisul Islam Mahmud, Zia Uddin Ahmed Bablu and Kazi Firoz Rashid and lawmaker Salma Islam spoke at the rally chaired by Sabbir Ahmed, chairman of Zakiganj upazila parishad.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the first death anniversary of Gano Sangit singer Noren

Chandra Das.

On the occasion, Gita recitation, smriti torpon (remembering) and kirtan will be held at his eldest son Nani Gopal Das's residence at 124/1/A at Ahmadbagh in Basabo in the city.

Noren inspired the mass people of Barisal town by singing Gano Sangit (mass song) during the mass upsurge in 1969 and 1970.

Following this, he was attacked by Pakistan collaborators in the town, said a press release.

Noren, also a Nazrul Giti singer, was one of the founders of Barisal Chaturanga Shilpi Gosthi.

He was the music director of Barisal Gano Shilpi Sangstha and assistant senior lecturer of Dhaka Kamalapur School and College.

Khalilur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the sixth death anniversary of SM Khalilur Rahman alias Khalil, a social worker, and father of SM Delwar Hossain, a senior reporter of News Network of Bangladesh and member of Bangladesh Crime Reporters Association, says a press release.

On the occasion, qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at his home at Shikdar Vila, House No-1, Road No-9, Block-B, East Rasulpur, Kamrangirchar today.

Relatives and well-wishers are requested to attend the programmes and pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Cleaner brick kilns stressed LDP to join BNP-led alliance after Dec 16

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday stressed the need for adopting cleaner, eco-friendly and energy efficient technologies in the country's brick making industries to reduce environment pollution and make efficient use of energy.

Existing brick kilns surrounding Dhaka are causing 40 percent of the city's air pollution, emitting eight million tonnes of carbon a year and causing the death of trees and serious diseases in humans, they said.

The seminar, "Environment friendly low-cost brick making technology", was jointly organised by The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Brazil in association with Gesellschaft Fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Annesha Group at a city hotel.

Speaking at the seminar, Industries

Minister Dilip Barua said environment friendly brick kilns are very important not only for the environment but also for development due to their low carbon emission rate and ability to reduce production costs.

Prof Abul Barkat, president of Bangladesh Economic Association, said change is inevitable and every nation and state is looking for environment-friendly technologies for uninterrupted development.

Prof Francisco Jose Casanova from Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil shared an innovative and environment-friendly brick making technology through a Powerpoint presentation.

The Brazilian Ambassador to Bangladesh Ricardo Luiz Vianna Carvalho, Otto Gomm of GIZ Bangladesh and Annesha Group Managing Director UM Ashek also spoke at the seminar.

Pak atrocities still haunt war journos

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign journalists who covered the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971 revisited the memory lane at a time when war crimes trial started after 40 years of its independence.

The journalists were so shocked to see the brutalities and carnage carried out by the Pakistani occupation forces and their collaborators--Razakars, Al-badrs and Al-shams--that they alerted the world by sending horrifying stories, including massacre in their respective media after starting of the genocide on March 25, 1971.

Sir William Mark Tully, Manosh Ghose, Simon Dring, Ingvar Oja and Sydney Schanberg were among the journalists.

The journalists extensively visited different parts of the then East Pakistan and made reports on the large-scale slaughtering of unarmed Bangalees, raping of women, arson and looting in 1971.

The then BBC correspondent Sir William Mark Tully was greatly shocked to see the vast devastation while leading Indian journalist Manosh Ghose said the scenes of carnage and sites of the

1971 Liberation War still gave him nightmares.

"I was greatly shocked to see the vast devastation on both the sides of the river Jamuna as I was traveling to Aricha Ghat. The houses on both banks were burnt so that Pakistani forces could make easy movement in absence of locality."

Manosh Ghose of The Statesman of India said one of the worst killings he had witnessed was at Chacher Rajbari on the outskirts of Jessore town on March 30 when large-scale slaughtering of Bangalees took place and their bodies were piled up in a pond.

"The genocide was the worst since the holocaust perpetrated by Hitler in the Second World War," Manosh, the first Indian and perhaps foreign journalist to enter Bangladesh on March 28 through Jessore frontiers, three days after the launch of the Pakistani crackdown on unarmed Bangalees.

Asked about the trial of perpetrators

of crimes against humanity in 1971, he said, "It is a much welcome move."

Swedish journalist Ingvar Oja witnessed signs of Pakistani brutalities while making several clandestine walks across the border from West Bengal into Bangladesh territory.

During the war, Ingvar, war correspondent of Sweden's highest circulated daily Dagens Nyheter, visited Dhaka once officially with Pakistani visa and later entered deep into occupied Bangladesh crossing West Bengal border risking his life to cover war events.

Ingvar was in Kolkata when the open war broke out between Pakistan and India on December 3, 1971, and he had the opportunity to witness the formal surrender of the Pakistani troops on December 16, 1971, at the then Racecourse Maidan.

The Pakistani rulers forcibly evicted the foreign journalists who were staying at Intercontinental Hotel (now Ruposhi Bangla) of Dhaka after start-

ing the genocide.

However, some brave journalists including Simon Dring of Daily Telegraph of the UK hid themselves at the Intercontinental Hotel laundry.

Simon Dring, the then correspondent of the Daily Telegraph, witnessed the massacre of unarmed Bangalees by Pakistani Army on March 25. "Tanks crush revolt in Pakistan," was the headline of Simon Dring's story published in the Telegraph and it was the first report that informed the world of the brutalities of the Pakistani forces.

In June, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Sydney Schanberg filed a number of eyewitness accounts from Bangladeshi towns for The New York Times. In response, the Pakistan army expelled him from the country on June 30, 1971.

Schanberg described the systematic subjugation and killing of Bangalees. "Army trucks roll through the half-deserted streets of the capital of East Pakistan these days, carrying 'anti-state' prisoners to work-sites for hard labour. Their heads are shaved and they wear no shoes and no clothes except for shorts--all making escape difficult."

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BBC

BGB-BSF MEETING STARTS TODAY Border killing to top agenda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will raise issue of killing innocent Bangladeshis on border in a four-day deputy director general (DDG) and inspector general (IG) level meeting between Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF).

The DDG and IG level meeting will begin today in Shillong of India and end on December 15. A 12-member delegation led by DDG Brig Gen Abu Sayeed Khan of BGB will leave for India today to attend it.

Kidnapping Bangladeshi nationals, trespassing by Indians, smuggling narcotics, including phensidyl, cannabis and women and children trafficking, dismantling phensidyl factories along the border in Indian territory will also figure prominently on the agendas for discussion, said a BGB official.

BGB sources said killing of innocent Bangladeshis tops the agenda.

Ruhal asks for fire safety at DMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr AFM Ruhal Haque yesterday directed the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) authority to arrange adequate fire safety equipment and train its employees to tackle any fire incident at the hospital.

The health minister visited the DMCH in the afternoon.

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