

SHAHEED ASAD DAY  
Call to realise  
martyr's  
dream

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shaheed Asad Day was observed in the country yesterday commemorating the supreme sacrifice of the student leader in 1969 and the days of mass upsurge against military domination under dictator Mohammad Ayub Khan.

Marking the day, Workers Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Revolutionary Workers Party, National Awami Party and Bangladesh Jubo Mohore placed wreaths at Asad's memorial plaque before Dhaka Medical College and held discussions.

Speakers at the discussions said the dream of the martyrs of the 1969 mass upsurge and the War of Liberation was distorted more than once in the past four decades, says press releases sent by the parties.

They urged people to awaken through another mass upsurge to defeat imperialists and capitalists and establish Asad's dream of a state free from deprivation.

Meanwhile, Narsingdi unit Awami League and BNP placed wreaths on Asad's grave in Shibpur, held discussions and organised free health care services to observe the day.

Asaduzzaman, a student of history department of Dhaka University, president of the DU unit and general secretary of the Dhaka city unit of East Pakistan Chhatra' Union (Menon group), died on this day in 1969 after Pakistan's security forces fired into a protest march he was leading on Dhaka's streets.



Devotees from home and abroad throng the second phase of Biswa Ijtema, the world's second largest Muslim gathering after Hajj, on the banks of the river Turag in Tongi yesterday.

PHOTO:  
FOCUS BANGLA

## 2nd phase of Biswa Ijtema begins

HELEMUL ALAM

The second phase of Biswa Ijtema, the world's second largest Muslim gathering after Hajj, began yesterday on the banks of the river Turag in Tongi on the outskirts of the capital.

Lakhs of devotees from home and abroad have joined the second phase with over 2000 devotees coming from different countries.

The first day saw huge presence of devotees, as many people came only to join the Friday prayers. Maulana Qwari Zobayer, Imam of Kakrail mosque, led the Juma prayers.

The vehicular movement from Abdullapur to Gazipur Chowrasta (intersection) was halted for about one hour due to the prayers, as a huge number of devotees performed the prayers on the streets and many more on the roof of buses because of shortage of space.

The second phase of the Ijtema began with the Boyan (sermons) of Moulana Ehsan of Tablig Jamaat of India after Fajr prayers yesterday.

Meanwhile, an Afzal Hossian, 75, of Sunamganj died of cardiac arrest early Friday. His namaj-e-janaza was held just after the prayers where lakhs of people attended.

The weather was good in the morning, but devotees had to suffer in afternoon drizzling.

For the second time, the Ijtema is being held in two phases, which has been a three-day single-phase gathering since 1946. This year, the first phase took place on January 13-15, attended by devotees from 32 districts of the country. People from the rest of the districts are joining the second phase.

The three-day second phase of the Ijtema includes boyans (sermons) on the fundamental issues of Tablig, prayers for the spiritual adulation, exaltation and welfare of the Muslims, recitation from the Quran and Hadith, and arrangements of dowry-free marriages.

Though the Ijtema committee divided the Ijtema into two parts to reduce pressure, many devotees who attended the first phase

also joined the second phase, making the size of the gathering almost the same as in the first phase, Amzad Hossain, a devotee of Tongi, said.

Renowned local and foreign Muslim scholars will deliver their sermons after Fajr, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib, and Esha prayers during the three-day Ijtema.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police sources said multi-tier security measures have been taken in and around the ground to avert any unpleasant incidents. Helicopters, speed-boats, and pick-up vans will keep tabs on the area and fire Brigade cars and ambulances stand by for any emergency, the sources added.

The DMP sources said around 10,000 security personnel from different agencies are to maintain law and order on the Ijtema ground. As in the first phase, law enforcement agencies have set up 11 watchtowers and check posts at every entrance, while several security cameras have been installed across the venue to monitor the Ijtema ground.

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation

and Bangladesh Railway have arranged special bus and train services on the occasion to facilitate the movement of devotees. Different organisations are also giving free medical services at the Ijtema.

It is expected that the number of devotees will increase during the Akheri Munajat (the concluding prayers) on Sunday.

Though effective measures have been taken for smooth supply of water, the devotees suffered water shortage yesterday morning. Anowar Hossian, a devotee from Munshiganj, said he could not take a bath due to shortage of water.

Many people including women were seen selling water for ablution of the devotees who came only to attend the Juma prayers. "I have been selling one jar of water at Tk 5, which I bought from another place by Tk 15 a pitcher", said Jahanara who earned Tk 500 in the Akheri Munajat of the first phase.

President Zillur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, ministers, and political leaders joined the concluding prayers of the first phase.

## Dhaka-Aricha road a death trap: Quader

STAR REPORT

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said the 22 dangerous curves, which have made the Dhaka-Aricha highway a death trap, will be widened to four lanes.

In an attempt to check road accidents on the busy highway, the work will be completed in the next three months, he said.

The minister told this to journalists after inaugurating a Load Control Station (weighing scale) at Bathuli in Dhamrai upazila to protect the road from damage by overloaded vehicles and control road crashes.

Quader said the weighing scale begins operation from today (yesterday), but the highway users, transport owners, and workers will be given 15 days to be aware. During the period, nobody will face penalty; legal action will be enforced from February 6, he added.

The minister also visited the 22 accident-prone points including Joka where filmmaker Tareque Masud, ATN news chief executive officer (CEO) Ashfaque Munier Mishuk, and three others were killed in an accident on August 13, 2011.

Local lawmakers Benzir Ahmed and Zahid Maleque Swapani, Roads and Highways Chief Engineer Aminur Rahman Laskar, and Nirapad Sarak Chai Andolon chairman Ilyas Kanchan were present during the visit.

## BOMB ATTACK ON CPB RALLY Trial demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday observed 11th anniversary of the killing at Paltan rally by reiterating the demand of bringing the killers under trial.

Addressing the programme, leaders of different political and socio-cultural organisations hoped justice would be delivered no matter how long it takes just like the way justice was delivered into the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and justice is being delivered against war criminals.

"The rally that came under attack was not merely a programme organised by the CPB. It was a gathering of students, youths, farmers, labourers, and intellectuals believe in progressiveness. The rally was also blessed with spontaneous attended of general people," said a press release issued by CPB quoting its president Manjurul Ahsan Khan.

On January 20, 2001, a CPB conference at Paltan ground came under bomb attack, killing Himangshu, Hasem, Majid and Mokter instantly while Bipradas Barua, later succumbed to his injuries at hospital.

"Communal force resorted to bomb and grenade attacks only to destroy the progressive spirit and kill non-communal atmosphere," the press release also quoted its general secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim.

Earlier, CPB placed wreaths at the makeshift memorial of the martyrs of Paltan bombing.

Workers Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon, lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badsha, BNP acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, JSD general secretary Sharif Nurul Ambia, BSD general secretary Khalequzzaman, Pankaj Bhattacharya of Gono Oikya Committee, and Jonayed Saki of Gonoshanghati also present on the occasion.

Separate organisations also placed wreaths at the memorial.



Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, centre, at a press conference of the organisation at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday.

## Local admin, leaders blamed for river destruction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The lower tiers of the administration and influential leaders are facilitating destruction of the rivers, though the government is spending huge money to save them, environmentalists said yesterday.

A new phenomenon of destroying rivers has emerged, they said, in which the local land administration first declares rivers as "degraded water bodies" and then other departments of the government provide money for excavating those for fish farming, bringing benefit for local influential leaders.

The environmental activists made the remarks at a press conference organised by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), an environmental organisation, at Dhaka Reporters Unity in the city.

They said crores of money is being spent for the cause of protecting rivers, but still most of the rivers remain on the verge of destruction.

In a written statement, Bapa general secretary Dr Abdul Matin described Boral River as the worst

example of river destruction by the government. He said that in 1985, the government erected at least eight sluice gates and four cross dams in the river, causing the water flow to decrease and the river to dry up.

**Grabbing, pollution, fish farming, constructing houses, and culverts went unabated, putting the river on the brink of destruction**

"Therefore, grabbing, pollution, fish farming, constructing houses, and culverts went unabated, putting the river on the brink of destruction", he said.

Although the upper level of the

government, especially the prime minister, announced firm stand to protect rivers, the lower tiers and political leaders are not speaking likewise, as they are the beneficiaries, he said.

There were 750 rivers in the country in the sixties and the number came down to 230 now, he said, adding that 25 out of 230 rivers are now near dead.

Dr Matin demanded removal of cross dams, culverts, regulators, sluice gates, and structures from all rivers immediately and requested the local administration and political leaders to keep rivers free from grabbing, pollution, and structures.

Bapa president Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said rivers are being destroyed frequently by putting up dams, building housings, lifting sands, and making fish enclosures. "Rivers are like vein, which keep us alive". The next generation will curse us if we fail to protect them, he said.

He said there is a taskforce on rivers but it is never seen active. It is people who can save the rivers by raising their voices and the media has a role to play to inspire people, he added.

## BSF torture on Bangladeshi condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different socio-political organisations yesterday strongly protested the brutal torture on a Bangladeshi national, Habibur Rahman, by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and demanded exemplary punishment to those responsible.

They urged both the government of Bangladesh and India to hold fair and impartial investigation into the "inhuman and cruel incident".

A video footage was aired on some Indian TV channels, including NDTV recently, showing the Bangladeshi was being beaten up by some BSF members at Murshidabad in Paschimbanga. He was tortured as he allegedly refused to pay them bribe.

Terming the incident a gross violation of human rights, the organisations said that such incident would continue to occur if the accused go unpunished.

Condemning the torture, leaders of the Ganotantrik Bam Morcha said the incidents of killing of Bangladeshi and torture on them by the BSF have been happening one after another due to bow down foreign policy of the government.

They demanded that the government would protest against the incident strongly.

Bangladesh Jubo Maitri and Ganosanghati Andolon, in separate messages, also condemned the incidents.

This kind of incident is not only shameful but also a barrier to the relation between Bangladesh and India, they said.

## Rickshaw puller 'electrocuted'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A rickshaw puller allegedly died in electrocution in the capital's Pallabi area yesterday.

Anisur Rahman, 25, was electrocuted while he was bathing at an under-construction building at about 12:30pm at Pallabi in Rupnagar.

Caretaker of the building, Abdul Majid, took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctor declared him dead.

DMCH source said marks of injuries were found at different parts of his body.

Hospital's camp police picked up the caretaker.

Majid told journalists that the deceased is a rickshaw puller. Anisur often came to take shower at the under-construction building.

"As he switched on motor for shower, Anisur got electric shock and skid off on brick's pile," he claimed.

Sub-Inspector of Pallabi Police Station Feroz Hossain Molla said the construction workers told police that they witnessed him electrocuted.

The Daily Star

Star Campus

LINKING YOUNG MINDS TOGETHER

## LINKING YOUNG MINDS

This week's Star Campus magazine, a weekly supplement of The Daily Star, will consist of a variety of interesting articles for young readers everywhere. The spotlight will be about the trauma students' face due to violence on campus and how it may affect them.

The article about the importance of vacation for student to take some time off and catch a break will give the young readers a sense of relaxation.

There will be the regular Silly Tales written to by students who want to share a good laugh with everyone.

There will also be an exclusive interview with musician Shams Bin Quader who will give the readers a sneak-peak into his childhood and school life memories.

Catch the Star Campus tomorrow and have a good read!

