

EMPOWREMENT OF WOMEN

Standard Chartered Star hold Celebrating Life Gala 2013



Clockwise from the top, a view of the elegantly lit stage; Standard Chartered Bank Bangladesh CEO Jim McCabe speaks; visitors take a look at the photos that entered the competition; veteran photographer Anwar Hossain receives his lifetime achievement award from Cultural Minister Abul Kalam Azad, while on his left is Gazi Mazharul Anwar who received lifetime achievement award in music; and the audience enjoying the musical show.

PHOTOS:
RASHED SHUMON



Close shave for a cause

FROM PAGE 16
North Bengal. Our planes were fitted with imaging devices and we flew overhead and made a map of the lay of the land for strategists. The hilly areas of Dinaipur were heavily fortified by the Pak army back then," said Kaul.

He told this correspondent that although he had initially signed up for the war because it was his duty to serve his country, the battlefield made him believe in the cause of our independence.

"While flying overhead, I saw the kind of oppression the Pakistani army inflicted on the people of this land -- village after village was completely burnt down. The Pak army left a trail of ruin wherever they went. The lines of refugees going into India could be seen even from the

air. That was when I realised why we had to fight the Pak army."

On December 3, Kaul was shifted from reconnaissance to combat. The Indian army attacked Dhaka in order to lay siege to the capital, Kaul recalled.

"It was important to make the Pak army feel like they were cornered. We destroyed all major communications -- bridges, roads, army barges," said Kaul.

On December 15, Kaul's fleet bombed a government house where General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi was holding a meeting with his officials. Kaul told The Daily Star he believes that the attack might have been one of the factors that led to the surrender the next day.

"I think Niazi finally realised the futility of their operations in this land. We were everywhere, tracking them down, destroying them," Kaul observed.

It was during their operation in Dhaka that Kaul had a close shave with death.

"I flew into a mist, and in that moment of blindness, I was suddenly attacked by a Pakistani fleet. I was gunned down and could barely escape."

His one regret is that because he was stationed in Hasimara, he could not attend the signing ceremony between General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi and Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora, where the Pak army had surrendered on 16 December 1971.

A cure for jetlag?

FROM PAGE 16
Results from the study, published in journal Science, suggest the newly-found button could be used to switch the master clock to a new time zone, for example from London to Beijing, in just one day.

A team based at Kyoto University in Japan discovered the 'reset button' in the brain.

There are clocks located throughout the body but the master clock is found within the brain, where it works to keep the body in tune with the world around us, creating fatigue at night and alertness during daylight.

The clock uses light to monitor time, but adjusts slowly. For every time zone travelled, it takes the body approximately a full day to catch up, according to the BBC.

Shift work or long haul flights disrupt sleep and

hunger patterns, as the body clock falls out of tune with the rising and setting of the sun.

The master 'clock' is comprised of a group of about 10,000 brain cells that communicate with each other in order to control the time.

The team of scientists discovered that by interfering with the vasopressin receptors -- brain cell 'ears' that allow them to talk to each other -- allows the clock to move more rapidly.

The team, led by Yoshiaki Yamaguchi, examined genetically modified mice with no vasopressin receptors and found they were able to re-adjust clocks that have been put back eight days within one day.

Mice without vasopressin receptors again managed to re-adjust their clocks more rapidly and adjusted within two days.

Secularism choking

FROM PAGE 16
Vice-chancellor Prof Mushirul Hasan presented a keynote paper at the programme while Itihas Sammilani Convener Prof Muntassir Mamoon chaired the inaugural session. Prof Mohammad Salim of Jagannath University gave the vote of thanks.

Hasan, a prominent scholar of India, said the societies of the South Asian countries were not secular as pluralism was absent here.

"The Indian constitution is secular but our societies are not that. There is a lack of efforts to secularise the society," he noted.

In the region's political domain, there are many groups that obstruct secularism, and the sad thing is that the states are also negotiating with them, he added.

According to him, secularism is the only way out in the prevailing situation and

that secularism is not against religion it is rather like a negotiation with religion to promote pluralism in the society.

Muntassir Mamoon alleged the BNP-Jamaat pushed the country backward through using religion in politics and Jamaat was still active to harm the country.

"In the coming days, as the election is ahead of us, we don't have any alternative but to win," he added.

Prof Tariq Rahman, a scholar from Pakistan, narrated the miserable condition of his country because of the influence of religious fundamentalism in politics.

"For promoting communalism, the use of religion here has caused humiliation for people," he said.

Addressing as the chief guest at the inaugural session, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said religious fundamental-

ism was impeding progress not only in South Asia but also across the world.

"We have the heritage of religious co-existence for thousands of years here. We must cherish the spirit of non-communalism to lead Bangladesh ahead," she added.

Addressing as the special guest, lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon said religious fundamentalism never had any place in Bangladesh but conspiracies of some fundamentalist groups had always existed.

"Religion has now emerged as the prime issue in our politics because we are now putting more focus on our religious identity," he added.

Airya Vidyasekera, a prominent scholar and human rights activist of Sri Lanka, also spoke on the occasion.

Jatrabari woes end before Eid

FROM PAGE 16
The air and noise pollution, caused by the construction work, had been like a hell for locals, said Delwar Hossain, a worker of a restaurant at Jatrabari intersection.

During a visit to the site last week, this correspondent found that workers at Jatrabari, Sayedabad, Kaptanbazar, Tikatuli, Hatkhola and Fulbaria points were busy to get the flyover and its ramps ready for inauguration.

Locals, however, said the separator walls, which were erected all along the central portion of the existing road, occupied ten to fifteen feet areas to guard the flyover pillars.

These walls would obstruct the movement of people, they added.

Md Sabuj, a local trader and also a resident of Wari, said, "Now we have to negotiate a one-kilometre

detour at Joykali Mondir with to go to Tikatuli due to the pillar guards."

Mostafizur Rahman, a traffic police constable, said it seemed unwise to occupy such a valuable space of the existing road with guard walls. The space could at least be used for car parking.

Md Ashiqur Rahman, project director of the flyover, said the separator walls were a part of the design to save the heads of piers on which the flyover carriageway rested against any possible collision of vehicles.

There would be landscaping on the space enclosed with the guard walls, he said, adding that it was not a reasonable idea to park cars in the middle of the road.

Salman Obaidul Karim, managing director of the concessionaire Belhasa

Accom and Associates Ltd, said the pier guard walls had nothing to do with the beautification or inauguration of the flyover.

However, Prof Md Shamsul Haq, who teaches civil engineering at Buett, said the pier heads were supposed to be above headroom and be saved by design.

Only the pillars should be protected with the minimum of median to ensure maximum width of the existing road, added Haq, who is also involved as technical expert on various communications projects.

Project officials said the up and down-ramps at Shanir Akhra and Chankharpool and one up-ramp at Motijheel along with the main flyover would be ready for inauguration.

But the up and down-ramps at Janapath, Sayedabad and Dhaka-

Mawa road would take four more months to complete as those sites were still occupied illegally, they added.

Earlier, the government had set several deadlines for the flyover's inauguration ahead of time and deferred those in each case.

The construction work was delayed time and again due to the presence of underground and overhead cable lines of utility services along the project's pathway.

Such delay further increased the public suffering.

The Tk 2300 crore flyover, country's first ever Public Private Partnership scheme, is being constructed on Build Own Operate Transfer basis.

The concessionaire is to hand it over to the government after 24 years of concession period.

Teachers stay on streets over pay

FROM PAGE 1
Teachers say the education sector has seen some major changes in recent years, but little has been done towards a separate pay scale. They put the blame on the education ministry officials.

They are also sceptical if the government would fulfil the promise now that it is at the fag-end of its tenure.

Amid such scepticism, the nation is observing the World Teachers Day today.

The ruling Awami League in its election manifesto declared, "A higher salary scale for teachers will be ensured. A permanent pay commission and a separate service commission will be instituted for teachers."

The education ministry in 2011 formed a committee comprising educationists and officials of different ministries concerned to devise a separate pay scale, but the committee could only sit twice so far.

"We asked for some

information like the number of teachers from primary to university level and teachers' salary structure in neighbouring countries. But we are yet to get complete information," Quazi Faruque Ahmed, one of the members of the committee, told The Daily Star.

He claimed he had made a proposal to set a specific timeframe for implementing a separate pay scale for teachers.

Speaking anonymously, another member of the committee said the ministry had to remain too busy with multifarious work and that was why they could not put much emphasis on it.

Teachers say bright students with good academic records do not want to take up their careers as teachers because of poor salary and low status.

Citing examples of the primary schoolteachers, they say currently a non-trained assistant teacher monthly earns around Tk

8,000 in total. The basic salary of a non-trained assistant teacher is Tk 4,700, while trained ones get Tk 4,900 per month, they inform.

"How can we expect meritorious students to become primary schoolteachers? Would a university graduate like to be a Class III government employee with such poor salaries?" said Aminul Islam, a teacher of a government primary school in the capital.

Educationists think an attractive pay structure is a must to encourage meritorious students to join this profession.

"If we want to attract talented and committed people to this profession, we have to ensure attractive salary packages. Besides, an attractive salary structure will help ensure quality education," said Prof Siddiqur Rahman, a teacher of the Institute of Education and Research, Dhaka University.

Prof Siddiqur, also a

member of the Education Policy Formulation Committee, suggested teachers be paid more than other service holders, like those in administration and agriculture to encourage meritorious students to join the profession.

"It would not be possible to provide the teachers with salaries similar to that of developed countries considering our financial constraints; but at least teachers' salaries can be increased," he added.

Contacted, Education Secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury said the present government had increased teachers' salaries and benefits in last four years and the issue of a separate pay scale was also in the offing.

"The ministry was working for a separate salary structure for the teachers, but finance is a big issue. We hope to come up with a separate pay scale soon," he expressed the hope.