

Bangabandhu

FROM PAGE 3
and socio-cultural organisations placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu, and offered munajat seeking eternal peace of his departed soul.

People from all walks of life thronged at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at the capital's Dhanmondi, and made a vow to work together following Bangabandhu's ideals.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also the AL president, along with her cabinet and party colleagues paid rich tributes to her father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the morning. After laying the wreaths, she stood in solemn silence for some time as a mark of respect to the memory of the architect of independent Bangladesh.

President Abdul Hamid and Hasina later visited Gopalganj's Tungipara, where Bangabandhu was born on this day in 1920, and paid tributes to his graveyard while a smartly turned out contingent drawn from Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force gave a guard of honour.

Abdul Hamid and Sheikh Hasina also joined a munajat seeking eternal peace of the departed soul of Bangabandhu as well as other martyrs of the August 15 carnage.

The AL hoisted national and party flags atop Bangabandhu Bhaban and party offices across the country at 6:30am.

Meanwhile, marking the day, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) authorities arranged a free medical service camp on the university premises, where some 5,528 patients were provided medical services free of charge.

Besides, BSMMU organised a photo exhibition on life-sketch of the father of nation and a painting competition participated by children of the university's teachers and staff.

All public hospitals across the country followed suit.

Dhaka University observed the day with different programmes including cake cutting at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall and a discussion at the Teacher-Student Centre auditorium with its Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique in the chair.

Special prayers seeking divine blessings for his departed soul was held at Dhakaswari National Temple while factions of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) jointly organised a discussion at Jatiya Press Club auditorium in the capital.

Bangladesh Shishu Academy will hold a nine-day long book fair from today while a discussion will be organised by AL at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre today, marking the day.

JU campus

FROM PAGE 3
research, not for enjoying reunions of different districts, picnics of school-college or anything else," said Associate Professor Golam Rabbani of history.

"Some unscrupulous staffers are making money by doing this," he said, adding, "People involved in higher studies and researches are always welcome here."

"A university is a sacred place. Security is becoming worse due to the overflow of people and their vehicles. Even we can't walk freely," alleged Associate Professor Rayhan Rhnye of philosophy.

"We can't even have our meals at Bhattala, crowds are everywhere... They have turned different places of JU into garbage spots, which has a direct impact on the physical environment," said Prof Khair Uddin of environmental sciences.

A squabble between a guest and some students occurred a few weeks before as a picnic-goer parked his car on the road, congesting the passage. There was also another student-outsider confrontation in the transport area, said Hassan Mahmud, a second-year anthropology student.

A policy has to be formed immediately, students and teachers echoed, adding that the authorities need to place some awareness boards and install a good number of trash bins to keep the campus clean.

We allow people to enjoy the local and migratory birds and lilies during winter, but visitors started coming in groups and soon arranged picnics here, said Registrar Abu Bakr Siddique.

"We are going to form a standard policy through JU syndicate to restrict visiting the university and entering of the outsiders," he added.

Only after complying with university terms and conditions and paying fees, visitors and outsiders could come to the university, he said, adding that it will be enacted very soon. "In the future, visitors will have to follow instructions, and they would only be allowed to prepare food near the cafeteria."

BB HEIST

CID-FBI meeting today

UNB, Dhaka

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police will hold a meeting with the US Federal Bureau of Investigation in the city today over the \$101m heist at Bangladesh Bank.

The meeting will be held at the CID headquarters in the afternoon, Deputy Inspector General of CID Saiful Alam told reporters at the central bank yesterday.

A seven-member CID team, led by Saiful, went to the BB as part of their investigation into the cyber scam.

The DIG said they will sit in the meeting with the FBI officials, attached

with the US embassy in Dhaka, to discuss the incident.

Noting that the investigation agency has already seized the BB computer server, he said they were scrutinising the security of the server networking system.

The investigators will interrogate the present and former BB officials, including Atiur Rahman who resigned on Tuesday as its governor, for the sake of proper investigation, added Saiful.

The CID was tasked with the investigation after the central bank on Tuesday filed a case with Motijheel Police Station in connection with the heist.

'Take me to my parents'

FROM PAGE 1

made her memorise the number, just in case.

A policeman then called her mother around 2:00pm, informed her about the girl and asked her to come to Mohammad Police Station.

The girl's parents rushed from their Rayerbazar house in the capital and took her home around 4:00pm.

Talking to The Daily Star, Sultana Begum, the mother, said she gave Nafia Tk 10 to have ice cream. Around 1:00pm, the girl went out of the house to buy ice cream from a nearby shop.

Sultana became anxious when Nafia did not return home even after 15-20 minutes. She then went to the shop, whose owner said he saw Nafia with a woman.

Alarmed, Sultana called her husband Nurul Haque Rana, a cleaner supervisor of Dhaka North City Corporation. A little later, she went to the shop again to inquire about the woman.

It was at this point she got the call from the police.

Back to her parents, Nafia, a KG student at a local school, told this correspondent last night that when she went to the shop, a woman came there and identified herself as her aunty.

The woman showed her a note of Tk 1,000 and two notes of Tk 500 and said she would buy her shoes, dolls and ice cream. The woman took her towards the Beribadh area from where she hired a rickshaw. Once on the rickshaw, the woman took away her earrings.

"When I asked her 'why you are taking my earrings,' she asked me not to talk. She also warned that the rickshaw puller may take away my earrings otherwise," Nafia said.

The woman left her near the Camp, saying she was going to bring the key.

It was then that the child saw some cops, gathered the courage to run to them and demanded that they take her home.

AL MP flouts rules

FROM PAGE 20

"Boat is the symbol of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Sheikh Hasina assumed power with the boat symbol. Now, the boat symbol is running the country. So, the victory of the symbol must be ensured," he said, while delivering a speech at one of the gatherings.

He gave similar statements in two other events.

The meetings were held at Marichbunia Bazar under Patkelghata union parishad, at Amua Shaheed Raja Degree College playground under Amua UP and at Kathalia upazila parishad premises under Kathalia union.

Chairman aspirants of Patkelghata and Amua were present in the meetings held in their respective unions.

As per the electoral codes of conduct, ministers and MPs are barred from campaigning for votes in favour of any candidate. Anyone can be fined Tk 10,000 or imprisoned for six months or both for violating rules.

Talking to The Daily Star last evening, lawmaker Haroon denied making such statements and said the meetings had been arranged to observe the birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Returning officer of Patkelghata and Amua UP polls Jiad Hossen said he was not aware of the MP seeking votes for AL candidates.

Earlier on March 5, AL lawmaker for Barguna-2 constituency Shawkat Hasanur Rahman Rimon violated electoral rules by seeking votes for an AL candidate at a public meeting in Barguna.

Police 10 days later filed a case against Rimon as per instructions of the Election Commission for the violation of electoral rules.

The EC on March 9 issued a show-cause notice to AL lawmaker of Pabna-2 constituency Azizul Huq Arzu for similar offence.

Meanwhile, BNP men have been harassed in some districts. Polls-related violence also took place in a few UPs.

In Khulna, the district BNP at a press conference yesterday said AL men continued attacking BNP men and their residences to create panic.

False cases were filed against BNP's candidates to pressurise them to quit the electoral race, said Nazrul Islam Manju, a BNP leader of Khulna, adding that amid such a situation voters have doubts as to whether the polls would be free and

Girl beaten

FROM PAGE 20

against Sujon and three others of his family with Madhupur Police Station.

Safiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of the police station, said all the accused went into hiding.

Police were trying to arrest them, he added.

Neelbanolata

FROM PAGE 20

forest and found Hargoza (Dillenia pentagyna) with gigantic leaves. Amid tall trees were hanging eye-catching blue flowers, locally called *Nilata* or *Nalata*. I saw the flower for the first time. Later, I saw them in Patharia hill area in Borolekha of Moulvibazar and by the lake in the Samanbag tea garden.

The flowers were shining among the Lantana and other wild plants. The calm and quiet atmosphere and the crystal clear lake water and the mixed smell of the wild shrubs created an altogether different world. Eminent botanist Prof Dwijen Sharma in his book "Phulgulo Jeno Kotha" has called this flower Neelbanolata (Thunbergia grandiflora). Its common names are Bengal Clock Vine, Blue Trumpet Vine, and Blue Sky Vine.

They grow on their own in Chittagong Hill Tracts and in the Madhupur Shal forest. Their habitats, however, are facing a threat due to rapid and unabated deforestation.

Neelbanolata is native to Bangladesh and India. The trees of our evergreen forests are their favourite abode. Outside Bangladesh, they are abundant in Assam. These robust creepers may grow to a height of eight to 10 metres. The leaves have a rough surface and vary in shape.

The vines flower from March to December. The fruits are robust and can grow up to 3 to 5cm. In Malaysia, the leaves are used for treating stomach ailments. Indigenous people in our country also use the leaves of this tree for treating various ailments. They breed through seeds and cutting. The hanging flowers on fences are a feast for the eyes!

'Robber' killed

FROM PAGE 20

gunfight. After the gun battle, police found Obaidur lying on the spot, while others fled.

He was rushed to Shalikhia Upazila Health Complex where on-duty doctors declared him dead, the police official added.

Police claimed to have recovered a foreign pistol, three bullets, a magazine, and two sharp weapons from the scene.

Five law enforcers were also hurt during the gunfight, police also claimed. They took treatment at local clinics.

Pigeon patrol

FROM PAGE 20

The pigeon patrol is part of a wider project by Plume Labs in which 100 Londoners equipped with detectors will monitor pollution in different parts of the capital which can be checked by fellow residents.

Anyone wanting to take part can do so through a crowdfunding platform by buying a place for between £79 and £99 (100 to 126 euros, \$111 to \$140).

On Wednesday, 60 places had already been snapped up.

Britain's air pollution problem was the focus for tough questioning of Prime Minister David Cameron by opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn in parliament on Wednesday.

Corbyn cited data showing that 40,000 people die in Britain every year because of air pollution, which costs the British economy £20 billion.

A King's College study last year said air pollution had contributed to the death of 9,500 Londoners.

The Labour leader said the "sad truth" was that 500,000 people would die from pollution before Britain manages to attain its obligations to reduce levels -- 15 years after the timetable originally agreed with the European Commission.

London has recorded the highest nitrogen dioxide levels of any European capital and Britain in 2014 was taken to task by the European Commission for failing to meet its obligations.

Trump victory

FROM PAGE 20

Partnership between the US and 11 other American and Asian states signed in February, while "his hostile attitude to free trade, and alienation of Mexico and China in particular, could escalate rapidly into a trade war."

"There are risks to this forecast, especially in the event of a terrorist attack on US soil or a sudden economic downturn," it added.

However, the organisation said it did not expect Trump to defeat his most likely Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton, in an election and pointed out that Congress would likely block some of his more radical proposals if he won November's election.

Rated at 12 alongside the prospect of a Trump presidency was the threat of Islamic State, which the EIU said risked ending a five-year bull run on US and European stock markets if terrorist attacks escalated.

The break-up of the eurozone following a Greek exit from the bloc was rated 15, while the prospect of a new "cold war" fuelled by Russian interventions in Ukraine and Syria was put at 16.

BNP may amend charter

FROM PAGE 1

in the BNP's national executive and standing committees to reinvigorate the party that boycotted the 2014 parliamentary elections and ended up without a representation in parliament for the first time since parliamentary democracy was restored in 1991.

The draft proposals were approved by the BNP's national standing committee at a meeting last night. "A total of 45-50 proposals on charter amendments were approved at the meeting," BNP Standing Committee Member Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Star after the four-hour meeting chaired by Khaleda Zia.

This was the last meeting of the existing committee.

"Now the amendment proposals will be placed at the council for voting. If the councillors pass these, the amendments will be incorporated in the party constitution," said BNP spokesperson Asaduzzaman Ripon.

STANCE AGAINST EXTREMISM
"To make it clear that we stand against any kind of extremism and religious militancy, the BNP will add a paragraph in the party's declaration," a highly placed source in the BNP told this correspondent.

"The paragraph will read something like this: 'The BNP will intensify its actions against national and international terrorism and religious extremism. The nation will have to be cautious against all possibilities of rise in religious militancy and radicalism,'" he said.

The BNP has drawn a lot of ire from different quarters for allegedly patronising religious fundamentalists and extremists, especially after it formed an alliance with Jamaat-e-Islami, an Islamist party that actively opposed the country's Liberation War in 1971.

During the 2001-06 BNP-Jamaat rule, the country witnessed rise of militant forces including Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh led by Siddiquur Rahman alias Bangla Bhai, and Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh led by Shaikh Abdur Rahman. The now-banned outfits established a reign of terror in many places of the country in the name of Islam, and the then government turned a blind eye to this.

A top BNP leader said they want to specify the party stance on militancy to prevent such accusations in future. **SPECIFIC ROLES FOR TARIQUE, OTHER LEADERS**

In another possible amendment, the BNP will specify the areas of responsibility for Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman.

The existing provision makes him largely inactive as it says he can make decisions and perform organisational duties only in the absence of the party chief, said a senior BNP leader.

Apart from this, a new provision -- "One leader, one post" -- will be included in the party constitution. This will not allow anyone to hold more than one post in the organisation.

UK firm asks

FROM PAGE 20

proposed amount," said the ministry official, wishing anonymity.

Reliable sources in the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab) said they are expecting Restrata's proposal by today.

He said the proposals from both the companies will then be placed tomorrow at the meeting of the high-profile steering committee formed on March 13 for intensive monitoring of the airport's security management.

Headed by Civil Aviation Minister Rashed Khan Menon, the seven-member committee includes the prime minister's security adviser, senior home secretary, PMO secretary, secretaries of the civil aviation and foreign ministries and the Caab chairman.

The official said since the proposal is expected to involve more than Tk 10 crore, it requires a PPR (Public Procurement Resolution) and approval of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) and the cabinet committee on purchase.

19th Saarc summit

FROM PAGE 20

session "unanimously endorsed Pakistan's proposal to host the Summit."

"The meeting decided to hold the 19th Summit of the regional body in Pakistan on November 9-10 this year," Thapa told a press conference after the meeting.

Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali led the Bangladesh delegation at the meeting.

He emphasised on important areas of cooperation, including connectivity, trade and investment, energy, agriculture, and blue economy, said a foreign ministry press release.

Before the November Summit, which will be attended by heads of the states or governments of eight member states, the Council of Ministers comprising foreign ministers, the Standing Committee comprising foreign secretaries, and the Programming Committee comprising joint secretaries would be held in Pakistan, reported The

"For example," says the BNP leader, "there are some leaders who have posts in the central executive committee and in the district and upazila-level committees. They discharge all these duties simultaneously. This often weakens our organisational strength and deprive many dedicated leaders. We want to stop this practice."

FORMATION OF THINK-TANK
The BNP may introduce a provision for constituting a "think-tank" that will carry out research activities and organise seminars for the party, and train party leaders and activists, said sources.

"This committee will act like the International Republican Institution run by the Republican Party of the USA. Committee members will be paid for their jobs. There will be a board of governors consisting of experts both from inside and outside the party," said a BNP leader, who is a member of the amendment finalisation committee.

The experts will be picked from various fields like science and technology, labour, agriculture and manpower development.

"The heads of different sections will work as shadow ministers and provide necessary suggestions to the party. They will also identify the government's wrong policies and ways to counter those," he said.

COMMITTEE SHAKE-UPS
Party insiders said Khaleda mulls bringing major changes to the BNP standing committee, the party's highest policymaking body.

The 19-member committee now has 16 members. Of them, M Shamsul Islam and Sarwari Rahman have been sick for a long time now while Rafiqul Islam Miah has become inactive in politics.

Three posts have been vacant since the death of Khandaker Delwar Hossain and RA Ghani, and the execution of war criminal Salauddin Quader Chowdhury.

Under the circumstances, six or seven new faces may be inducted in the committee, sources said.

The party also plans to expand its national executive committee.

"The number of the committee members can be hiked from 386 to 451," said a BNP standing committee member.

If the new proposal is accepted in the council, the number of vice-chairman posts will be increased to 35 from 17, said Mahbubur Rahman after last night's meeting.

Yet another proposal suggests formation of an advisory committee, consisting of senior leaders from within the party or different pro-BNP professional bodies, said a leader close to Khaleda.

The BNP will stand reorganised after "young, brave, dedicated, popular and competent leaders" are picked through the council, hoped Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, acting secretary general of the party.

But another official of the civil aviation ministry said, "The high-profile steering committee might get the project rolling without the approval from Ecne or the purchase committee since it is an emergency project and it is being done for the sake of the country."

The British envoy and other UK delegation members during the March 13 meeting suggested hiring a foreign company for security management at the airport as Bangladesh "failed to meet" some international security requirements.

The meeting took place days after the UK government imposed a ban on direct air cargo from Dhaka to London on security grounds and the British prime minister wrote to his Bangladesh counterpart asking for foolproof security at the airport by March 31.

In the March 8 letter, David Cameron called for a visible improvement of airport security by March 31 to avoid further measures like banning of direct passenger Biman flights from Dhaka to London.

HimalayanTimes.

Meanwhile, the Council of Ministers endorsed the Saarc Standing Committee's recommendation that the Saarc Summits be held every two years in November. The decision, however, is subject to approval of the 19th summit itself.

The meeting also endorsed Pakistan's nomination of Amjad Hussain B Sial for the next secretary general of the regional body. Sial will replace Nepal's Arjun Bahadur Thapa in February next year.

Sial, a career diplomat at the Pakistan Foreign Service, has been an ambassador to various countries. He had served in the Saarc Secretariat in Kathmandu as a director from 2003 to 2006.

Meanwhile, the council recommended that the Saarc Disaster Management Centre (SDMC) be located in New Delhi, and the Environment Centre be merged with the existing Energy Centre in Islamabad.