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It's surrender to bigots

Secular forces denounce govt's recent 'compromises'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government would be bowing to communal forces if it decided to remove the statue from the Supreme Court premises, writers, publishers and cultural activists yesterday.

Speaking at a rally, they also termed defacing a wall painting near the Institute of Fine Arts of Chittagong University and changes in textbooks in face of demands by those "forces" attacks on the spirit of the Bangalees.

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigoshthi organised the rally in front of the National Museum in the capital's Shahbagh protesting what it said was "attack on the spirit of Pahela Baishakh and the government's mindless surrender to bigots".

Central leaders of the cultural platform said they held similar protest rallies across the country yesterday, at a time when they were supposed to stay busy in making preparations for Pahela Baishakh, the Bangla New Year.

Meanwhile, rights body Ain O Salish Kendra has expressed deep concerns over the Hefajat-e Islam's attempt to remove the statue and the government decision to recognise Qawmi madrasa certificates.

In a statement, ASK said the incident of defacing the CU Fine Arts Institute graffiti was frustrating.

"Pahela Baishakh represents our tradition. It is a collective and secular festival. However, defacing wall painting with burnt lubricant and Hefajat's irrational comment [over the statue removal] ahead of Bangla New Year created panic among people," reads the statement.

On Tuesday, the government said it would recognise Dawra degree of Qawmi madrasa as equivalent to Master's

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Miscreants on Wednesday erased most of this sign of Memory Eternal, a memorial with names of teachers, students and staff of Dhaka University who were killed during the 1971 Liberation War. DU Vice-chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique blamed the anti-liberation forces for this and said the sign of the memorial on the campus was rewritten yesterday. The incident happened just a day after the graffiti painted by students of Chittagong University's Institute of Fine Arts was defaced in the port city ahead of Pahela Baishakh celebrations. PHOTO: MAHDI AL MUHTASIM

AL 'cancels' Baishakh procession in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League will not bring out any Mongol Shobhajatra today marking Pahela Baishakh.

Awami League Central Working Committee, the party's highest decision-making body, made the decision at a meeting at the Gono Bhaban on Wednesday with AL President Sheikh Hasina in the chair, said sources.

The "cancellation" comes amidst protests and statements of Islamists parties and organisations against celebrations marking the first day of the Bangla calendar.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader, at a press conference at the party president's Dhanmondi office yesterday, said the decision was taken "realising sufferings to the city dwellers".

"For a long time we have been against any type of rally and we have taken the decision so that people will not suffer," he said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a programme on

MG!

"Real progressiveness means making realistic decisions in keeping with people's emotions."

AL GENERAL SECRETARY
OBAIDUL QUADER
ON RECOGNITION OF DAWRA DEGREE OF QAWMI MADRASAS

45,000 children die of diarrhoea every year

Says WHO report

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA and PORIMOL PALMA

Over 45,000 under-five children die every year in Bangladesh from diarrhea caused by contaminated water, says a report of World Health Organization.

Water contaminated with faeces puts people at risk of contracting cholera, dysentery, typhoid and polio, says the report titled "UN Water - Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water 2017".

The report released yesterday presented an analysis of the most reliable and up-to-date data from 75 countries and 25 external support agencies on the issues related to financing water and sanitation (WASH).

According to the report, contaminated drinking water causes more than 5,00,000 diarrhoeal deaths each year globally.

Talking to The Daily Star, Dr Firoze Ahmed, former scientist at the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr), said children under five were the main victims of contaminated water because of weak immune systems.

"Supply water in cities is sometimes contaminated with faeces and many people in the poor urban settlements drink it without boiling.

"It's often not known whether water marketed in jars comes from deep tube wells or river. Much of the water might be contaminated with bacteria,"

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AL FACTIONAL CLASH Jubo League man killed in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A Jubo League activist was killed and 10 others were injured in a factional clash of the ruling Awami League in Hatiya Upazila of Noakhali yesterday.

The dead, Nurul Alam, 30, was also an aide of Mohiddun Ahmed, chairman of Char King Union Parishad.

Of the injured, Muktar Hossain, 32, Mohammad Selim, 28, Afsar, 30 and Moniruddin, 27 were shot. They were admitted to Hatiya Upazila Health Complex and Noakhali General Hospital.

Mohiddun, also the general secretary of Hatiya Awami League, alleged that the incident took place when supporters of former lawmaker Mohammad Ali opened fire on his men yesterday.

Contacted, Mohammad Ali said he was aware of a clash but didn't know the details. He added he would try to get the details and inform this correspondent later.

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2 moons may support life



CNN

NASA has new evidence that the most likely places to find life beyond Earth are Jupiter's moon Europa or Saturn's moon Enceladus.

In terms of potential habitability, Enceladus particularly has almost all of the key ingredients for life as we know it, researchers said.

New observations of these active ocean worlds in the solar system were captured by two NASA missions and were presented in two separate studies in an announcement at NASA HQ in Washington yesterday.

Using a mass spectrometer, the Cassini spacecraft detected an abundance of hydrogen molecules

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CHANGE makers

A "changemaker" is an individual who positively shapes the environment around him or her. Star Changemakers, the latest addition to The Daily Star family, goes around the country finding the narratives of these changemakers and what influenced them, hoping their tales inspire you to find the changemaker in you too!

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SIBL
Social Islami Bank Limited
Prayer Timing April 14

AZAN	4-35	12-30	4-45	6-24	7-45
JAMAAT	5-10	1-15	5-00	6-28	8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Bats resting on a tree at a teak plantation in Sagardighee area of Tangail's Ghatail upazila recently. The area has been a safe haven for different species of bats for decades, but their number is decreasing.



A haven for bats

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

The teak plantation in Sagardighee area of Tangail's Ghatail upazila had been a safe haven for different species of bats for decades but their number is on decline.

Every day before evening, numerous bats start chirping and flying in the sky together.

"I have been seeing the bats in the forest area since the British era. Their number, however, has been reducing," said Mohammad Shamsuddin, an elderly man of Sagardighee.

PHOTO: STAR

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US drops 'mother of all bombs' on IS in Afghanistan

AGENCIES

The US military yesterday dropped the largest non-nuclear bomb ever deployed in combat, targeting an Islamic State complex in Afghanistan, the Pentagon said.

The GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast bomb hit a "tunnel complex" in Achin district in Nangarhar province, US Forces Afghanistan said in a statement.

The strike occurred at 7:32pm (1502 GMT), according to AFP.

"The GBU-43/B is the largest non-nuclear bomb ever deployed in combat," Air Force spokesman Colonel Pat Ryder said.

Pentagon spokesman Adam Stump said the bomb was delivered via an MC-130 transport plane.

"As (ISIS-Khorasan's) losses have mounted, they are using IEDs, bunkers and tunnels to thicken their defence," said General John Nicholson, who heads US Forces Afghanistan.

"This is the right munition to reduce these obstacles and maintain the momentum of our offensive against ISIS-K."

White House spokesman Sean Spicer said, "We must deny them operational space, which we did."

It was not immediately clear how much damage the bomb did.

Also known as the "mother of all bombs," the GBU-43 is a 21,600 pound (9,797 kg) GPS-guided munition and was first tested in March 2003, just days before the start of the Iraq war, reports Reuters.

According to the Air Force, the last time the bomb was tested in 2003, a huge mushroom cloud could be seen from 32 kilometres away.