

'71 war was never between India and Pakistan

Says liberation war affairs minister

UNB, Dhaka

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque yesterday said the war in 1971 was never a war between India and Pakistan rather it was a War of Liberation for Bangladesh. He was addressing the publication ceremony of a book as the chief guest at the city's national museum. The minister expressed gratitude to India for its tremendous support extended by its people and government in 1971. "India provided shelter, training and arms. We got all logistic support from India."

Later, the book titled "12 Days to Dacca", written by Mahfuza Gen HS Kler and edited by Wing Commander Deejay Kler, was unveiled both in Bangla and English. Deputy Indian High Commissioner Dr Adarsh Swaika, among others, spoke.

An Indian delegation, comprising 27 war veterans and four serving officers, accompanied by their companions participated in the Victory Day celebrations and shared their stories. During their stay in Bangladesh, they will attend the ceremonial events and interact with the prime minister, the chiefs of Army, Navy and Air Force and Principal Staff Officer, Armed Forces Division.

The delegation will also pay homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and also visit some of the battle sites of the Liberation War. The Indian delegation is led by Lt Gen (retd) Jai Bhagwan Singh Yadava who participated in the war. He was honoured with the gallantry award, "Vir Chakra", in the 1971 war for his acts of gallantry in the battle.



Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban illuminated in red and green marking Victory Day is indeed a sight to behold. The photo was taken around 7:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Victory Day today

UNB, Dhaka

The nation is celebrating 47th Victory Day today with elaborate programmes to pay deep homage to the martyrs who laid down their lives for the country during the Liberation War in 1971.

On this day in 1971, Pakistani occupation forces surrendered after a nine-month war resulting in independent and sovereign Bangladesh.

The day is a public holiday.

This year, the Victory Day celebration has reached a new height as the Unesco on October 30 recognised Bangabandhu's historic March 7 speech as a world documentary heritage.

On March 7 in 1971, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his fiery speech called on the freedom-loving Bangalees to wage a decisive struggle against the Pakistani rulers.

"Ebarer sangram amader muktir sangram, ebarer sangram swadhinatar sangram [The struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation, the struggle this time is a struggle for

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A people's mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury -- war veteran, politician and three-time mayor of Chittagong city -- was buried at his family graveyard at Chashma Hill in the city yesterday.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed their profound condolence at the demise of the veteran politician.

Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith and Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, among others, expressed their condolences.

Chittagong city Awami League has cancelled their Victory Day procession scheduled for today (December 16).

Earlier, people from all walks of life as well as leaders from all political parties thronged the city's Chashma Hill residence of Mohiuddin to pay their last



respect to Chittagong's iconic leader.

Mohiuddin became the first democratically elected mayor in the history of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) in 1994.

He was re-elected mayor in 2000 CCC election. In 2005, he won a landslide victory by defeating his opponent, Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin of BNP, by 91,000 votes.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister and also Awami League

General Secretary Obaidul Quader flew in to the port city from Dhaka after hearing the news of the demise of Mohiuddin, also the president of Awami League's Chittagong city unit.

Speaking with reporters at Mohiuddin residence, Obaidul said Mohiuddin became an indivisible leader of the people of Chittagong. "Mohiuddin for Chittagong and Chittagong for Mohiuddin -- this is the situation."

"The prime minister wanted him to be the party's presidium member and also wanted him to be a minister. But Mohiuddin did not take any [of the positions] as he didn't want to go anywhere leaving Chittagong," he said, adding, "He has left making Chittagong cry."

CCC Mayor and also Chittagong city

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GATE PASS AT CMCH Staff happy, attendants not so much

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

The situation of Chittagong Medical College Hospital has significantly changed after the authorities introduced a new system for visitors and attendants of patients last month, CMCH officials said.

It was found that there was no chaos of visitors inside the wards; nor was there any gathering of unwanted people in the hospital corridors unlike the past.

As per the system introduced on November 18, a patient admitted to the hospital gets two gate passes and will be allowed to have two attendants with him or her, said CMCH officials, adding that attendants and visitors will have to show the passes to security personnel at entrances to go inside the hospital.

Patients have to collect a gate pass in exchange for Tk 50, which is refundable, from the nursing-in-charge of the respective wards.

Sources said the CMCH authorities came up with the move as they received a lot of complaints from patients of stealing their valuables in different wards.

They added that besides this, brokers of different private clinics, diagnostic centres and pharmacies were seen to move in different wards to deceive patients.

Prabir Kumar Das, associate professor and head of cardiology at CMCH, on Wednesday told The Daily Star that a visible change was seen after the new system had been introduced.

"Earlier, we faced difficulties in providing treatment to patients as unwanted people gathered in his ward," he said, adding, "We could not differentiate the attendants of patients from the outsiders."

"Now, every attendant has to hang the gate pass around their neck and so we can identify them easily," he said. "My ward is now free from the brokers' nuisance and other unwanted people."

Hailing the new system, Minara Khanam, nursing superintendent at CMCH, said, "We often used to get allegations of stealing valuables from different wards, but we have not got a single complaint after introduction of the new system."

Many outsiders and vagabonds were seen sleeping in the hospital corridors at night,

said Rajib Kumar Dey, a ward master at CMCH. "When we asked them who they were, they said they were the attendants of patients."

Now, every attendant has to carry the gate pass and so the outsiders cannot enter the hospital. They can walk in the corridors comfortably, he said.

Meanwhile, some attendants said only two gate passes cannot meet their necessity and they demanded that the authorities allow at least three gate passes for a patient.

Talking to this newspaper, Timir Chowdhury, a patient's attendant, said his son was admitted to the hospital and his wife was attending him all the time. "I have to go outside to buy medicine and other necessities."

They have two gate passes, he added.



"My son's uncle and aunt came to the hospital to see him on Monday, but they had to wait to go inside the hospital for an hour as they did not have any gate pass."

"I was outside when they called me. I reached there after an hour and gave my gate pass to the uncle to enter the hospital ... when he came out, I gave the pass to the aunt and then she went inside. I could only get in the hospital when she came out."

"Had we have an extra gate pass, my wife could have given it to them and I would not have rushed there immediately," he said.

Contacted, CMCH Director Brig Gen Jalal Uddin said he did not receive any such complaint from patients.

"We are trying to improve the hospital condition, and decisions will be made after considering overall situation."



Students of Rajshahi University sign their names as part of a mass-signature collection campaign on the campus yesterday demanding Rajshahi University Central Students' Union (Rucusu) polls.

PHOTO: STAR

Have faith in AL: AG Distributes clothes among poor in Munshiganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam yesterday urged the people to have faith in Awami League and its election symbol "Nouka" (Boat) in order to build a country free from poverty and hunger.

The attorney general said this while distributing warm clothes among the poor in Abdullahpur and Betka areas in Tongibari upazila of Munshiganj.

He also visited a local temple and made a donation.

Local elected representatives and AL leaders were also present.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Fatema Begum, wife of late district judge Anwar Hossain, died of

old-age complications yesterday at her Mohammadpur residence in Dhaka, said a press release. She was 87.

She left behind her five sons, six daughters and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn her death, says a press release.

Fatema's first namaz-e-jaanaza was held at a mosque near her residence. She will be buried after arrival of her children who live abroad.

Her relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Fungi-resistant potato to save Tk 100cr a yr

UNB, Dhaka

Farmers in Bangladesh grow near 10 million tonnes of potato every year, well surpassing the domestic demand of the tuber crop, and export the surplus to 20 countries.

But to save the prime vegetable from fungal attacks (potato late blight), farmers in Bangladesh have to foot Tk 100 crore yearly bills on fungicide sprays.

Aiming to give the growers a relief from high fungicide expenditure and increase the output of potato, otherwise damaged by late blight, the government has embarked on a project to infuse the country's most popular potato variety -- Diamant -- with three resistant genes to fight the late blight.

All of these three genes -- taken from some of potato's wild species -- once engineered into the homegrown potato would make the new GM variety resistant to fungi and thereby, make the hazardous fungicides redundant, expect scientists.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury was present in the auditorium of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) in the capital on Wednesday where

Prof Dr David Douches from Michigan State University (MSU), a potato breeder for past 30 years, presented the plan before a scientific audience.

Bangladesh's premier farm research organisation -- Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) -- teamed up with the MSU, University of Minnesota and Simplot Plant Sciences of Idaho, USA, to breed the GM (genetically modified) potato expectedly in three years. The USAID is financing the US\$ 5.8 million research venture.

Once released, the triple-gene late blight resistant potato will be Bangladesh's second commercial GM agro product since the country's first one -- Bt brinjal -- released in 2013.

BARI, meanwhile, has also developed another fungi-resistant potato line and waiting for a regulatory approval. Scientists concerned, however, told the news agency that the line that BARI developed was infused with single resistant gene. They see much more potential in staking up of triple genes into potato so that it can withstand even strongest of fungal attacks.

Starting with just 20 back in 2013, as

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A brick kiln has been built damaging farm land in Tilargaon area under Shamsher Nagar upazila of Moulvibazar. The photo was taken last week.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR