

VULGAR DISPLAY OF POWER



30 lakh saplings for 30 lakh martyrs

UNB, Dhaka

Environment, Forests and Climate Change Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud yesterday said 30 lakh saplings will be planted to pay tributes to 30 lakh martyrs of the country's Liberation War on the occasion of "National Tree Plantation Campaign and Tree Fair" this year.

The minister revealed the information at a press briefing in the ministry's conference room.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the programmes at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center on Wednesday.

The minister said International Environment Day and Environment Fair will also be inaugurated on the same day.

Urging people to take part in the programmes to show respect towards the martyrs, he said everyone should come forward to protect the planet.

The government also has taken various initiatives to create awareness among people on the occasion of Environment Day and tree plantation campaign.

Assaulted for 'holding hands'

DU suspends 3 students
DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University authorities yesterday suspended three students for assaulting two of their seniors on campus on Saturday, and launched a probe into the incident.

The Proctor's office issued a press release announcing the suspension order on Md Sifatullah, a fresher at Department of Women and Gender Studies; Md Al-Imran, fresher at Department of Education and Research; and Md Mahmudur Rahman, a student of Institute of Modern Languages - all of them activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League.

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Students and teachers of Dhaka University congregated once again at the Shaheed Minar premises yesterday, demanding release of arrested quota reform protesters and a safe campus, when a group of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists took position in the vicinity, hurled abuses and intimidated them. Later, as the demonstrators marched towards the Raju Sculpture, the BCL men swooped in on them in the Shibbari area and assaulted the students. Meanwhile, a procession of Progotishil Chhatra Jote demanding a reform to the quota system instead of scrapping it, was blockaded by police near Shahbag.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON, PALASH KHAN

Don't isolate me from people: PM to SSF

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked Special Security Force (SSF) personnel to remain alert so that she does not get isolated from the public.

"I work for the people... if we get detached from them for whom we do politics, our lives will become meaningless," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said this while addressing a function marking the 32nd founding anniversary of SSF at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

She asked the SSF personnel to remain aware so that her contact with the general people is not hindered, as they are the centre of all power of the republic.

"As we are representatives of the public, we have to go to them every five years... we're accountable to them; you have to remain alert so that we can continue our communication with them," the PM said.

In this connection, Sheikh Hasina asked them to maintain their professionalism, discipline and rules.

Hasina said the activities of anti-liberation forces and terrorists made the security of the country more challenging, and SSF members will have to accomplish their responsibilities carefully with efficiency, considering the challenges.

She said that the security of those engaged in

ensuring her security is also very important.

The prime minister directed SSF members to remain vigilant and prepared with all necessary technological means to fulfil their duties with integrity.

She warned that criminals have also become experts in applying technology.

Keeping this in mind, Hasina said, her government has ensured necessary training for SSF

members and technical infrastructure for the force.

Earlier, Director General of SSF Major General Md Shafiqur Rahman delivered the welcome address.

The chiefs of the three services, principal secretary to the PM, PMO secretary, press secretary to the PM, and other senior officials of the PMO were present.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with members of Special Security Force (SSF) at PMO yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Journalists need to be sceptical

Training session told
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalists need to have training and professional scepticism to be able to serve the community better, speakers said at the closing session of a two-day workshop yesterday.

Journalists must be allowed to act independently and not serve anyone's interests, they said.

"A journalist must be professional and honest while checking facts for credible news, and be responsible while publishing news to earn public trust," said Shah Alamgir, director general of Press Institute of Bangladesh, in his concluding remarks.

Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC) with support from Internews Network organised the training session on "Fact checking and verification techniques in news reporting", attended by 26 journalists at The Daily Star Centre.

Syed Zain Al Mahmood, country director of Internews, said, "Scepticism is a safeguard for a professional journalist." Trained journalists empower people with accurate information and make democracy more meaningful, he added.

The training session focused on topics like fighting fake news and circular reporting (where a piece of information appears to come from multiple sources, but in reality, comes from only one source), verifying images and videos, analysing common mistakes in journalism, ensuring balance, overcoming bias, and using neutral language.

British journalist Chris Stephen from The Guardian, who has reported from eight war zones, conducted the workshop. AHM Bazlur Rahman, chief executive officer of BNNRC, was present.

Khaleda denied bail in case for demeaning martyrs

COURT CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, who has been in jail for about six months now, was denied bail yesterday in a case filed over demeaning Liberation War martyrs.

Dhaka's Metropolitan Magistrate Abu Sayeed passed the order after Khaleda's lawyer Masud Ahmed Talukder submitted a petition seeking bail in the case.

Earlier, on July 11, the same court issued arrest warrants for the BNP chief and party's senior leader Gayeshwar Chandra Roy in the case.

In January 2016, AB Siddique, president of Bangladesh Jananetri Parishad, a pro-Awami League organisation, filed the case over Khaleda's alleged insulting remarks about martyrs.

Taking cognisance of the allegation, another court directed the officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station to investigate the matter and submit a report.

On December 21, 2015, Khaleda, in her first public address in more than a year, said, "There are controversies over how many were martyred in the Liberation War."

Two days later, a Supreme Court lawyer served a legal notice on Khaleda, asking her to apologise to the nation within seven days or face legal consequences for her comments.

On December 25 the same year, in a flurry of outrageous remarks, Gayeshwar described the 1971 martyred intellectuals as "anti-liberation elements" who "died like fools" and drew salaries and allowances from Pakistan till the end of the war.

Different newspapers published the news items citing their comments, which defamed the image of freedom fighters who sacrificed themselves for liberating the country in 1971, said the complainant.

Meanwhile, the High Court yesterday heard for the second day the appeal filed by Khaleda challenging the trial court verdict that sentenced her to five years' jail in the Zia Orphanage Trust Corruption case.

The bench of Justice M Eanyetur Rahim and Justice

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DESTINY GROUP Dispose of graft case by April 18

HC directs trial court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the trial court concerned with finishing the proceedings of money laundering cases filed against Destiny Group officials, by April 18 next year.

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the graft cases with Kalabagan Police Station in July 2012, accusing 22 top officials of Destiny Group, including its Managing Director Mohammad Rafiqul Amin.

According to the cases' charge-sheet, top officials of Destiny misappropriated some Tk 4,200 crore through its tree plantation project and cooperative firm, and laundered the money abroad.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice KM Hafizul Alam passed the order following a prayer from the lower court seeking more time to conclude the trial.

Earlier in August 2016, HC ordered the trial court to finish the proceedings in the case within 12 months, said Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan.

On June 24 this year, Judge Md Akhtaruzzaman of the trial court concerned sent a letter to Supreme Court registrar general, praying for more time.

The SC Registrar General Dr Md Zakir Hossain placed the letter to the chief justice for a decision, who later sent it to the bench for disposal.

Murdered for Tk 500

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was stabbed to death yesterday, allegedly by his roommate, in Dhaka's Adabar area as the victim refused to pay borrowed money without his father's consent.

The victim Basir Talukder, 50, was a scrap material trader in Adabar.

The murder suspect, his roommate Alamgir, 22, is on the run.

Kawsar Ahemd, officer-in-charge of Adabar Police Station, said Basir and Alamgir used to share a room in Shyamoli Housing area for a long time.

Basir borrowed Tk 2000 from Alamgir's father Soju Mia, also a scrap material trader.

Around 9:00am yesterday, Alamgir wanted Tk 500 from Basir. The latter refused, saying that he

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FREEDOM FIGHTERS' AGE HC questions legality of setting 12.5 years minimum age

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the legality of the minimum age of freedom fighters to 12 years and six months, set by the government in January this year.

The HC bench of Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Md Ashraf Kamal in a rule also asked the government authorities concerned to explain in four weeks why the circular issued to this effect should not be declared illegal.

On January 17 this year, the liberation war affairs ministry in an amended gazette notification circular set the minimum age of a freedom fighter to 12 years and six months as of November 30, 1971.

Earlier on November 10, 2016, the ministry had fixed the minimum age of freedom fighters at 13 years as of March 26, 1971.

The HC bench issued the rule yesterday following a writ petition filed by Mahmud Hasan, director of department of geological survey, challenging the legality of the gazette notifications.

Mahmud Hasan recently submitted the petition, saying he is a freedom fighter and that he had joined the geological survey as a freedom fighter on June 26 of 1988.

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1ST DEATH ANNIVERSARY



LATE ALHAJ ASHRAF UDDIN AHMED
(11TH JANUARY 1925-16TH JULY 2017)

May Almighty Allah bless his grave, illuminate it and grant him wonderful and expanded compassion in the grave, Ameen. All are requested to pray for the departed soul.

- Family Members

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