

'A virtuous, brave man'

Colleagues, contemporaries pay tributes to Syed Ashraf at Shaheed Minar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

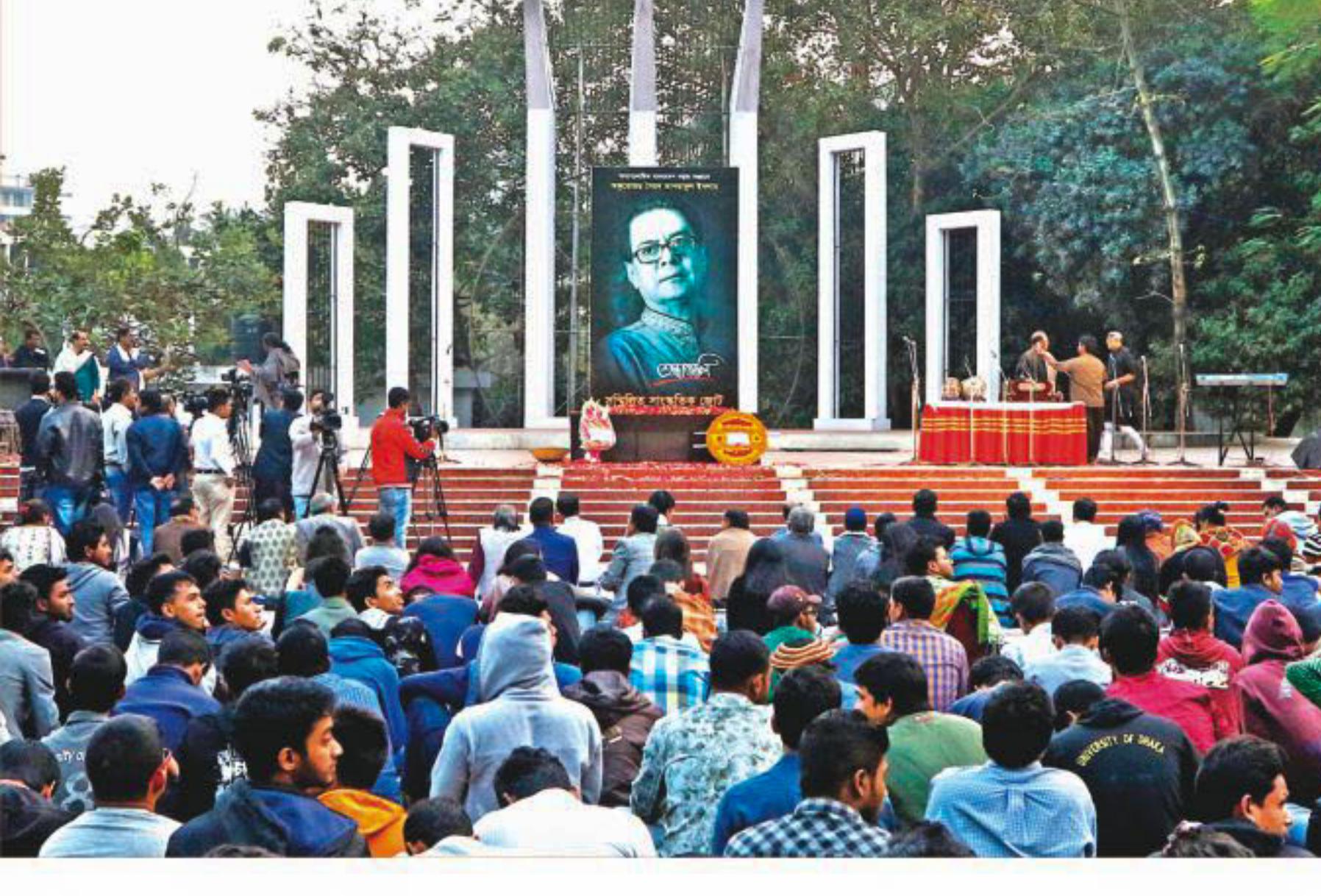
His steadfast role and wisdom during different crises of the nation including "1/11" and Hefajat-e-Islam's demonstrations in 2013 has made him immortal like his father, speakers said yesterday at a memorial meeting for recently passed minister Syed Ashraful Islam, former general secretary of Awami League (AL).

Syed Ashraful Islam, eldest son of Syed Nazrul Islam, acting president of the Mujibnagar government in 1971, died on January 3 at Bumrungrad International Hospital in Thailand at the age of 68.

"I saw him committed to ethics on face of continuous military pressure... Syed Ashraful Islam never became confused as the acting general secretary [of AL] during 1/11 while many [of the political leaders] were puzzled," said former information minister Hasanul Haque Inu at the event, held on the Central Shaheed Minar premises in Dhaka.

Sammita Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) organised the event where renowned politicians and cultural personalities spoke of how they had come to know Syed Ashraful Islam as a political colleague. Hundreds of people from all walks of life joined the event.

"He was a virtuous man, a brave man... [Ashraf] is the able son of an able father. Syed Ashraf has written his own path," said Inu.



People take part in a memorial programme in honour of Syed Ashraful Islam at Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka yesterday. The noted politician passed away on January 3.

PHOTO: STAR

The ugly underbelly of Mouchak flyover

MATHEWS CHIRAN

For about four years while the construction of the Moghbazar-Mouchak flyover was going on, residents of the city suffered through hours of traffic gridlocks, bumpy rides on submerged or pothole-riddled road below it, and severe air and noise pollution.

Locals breathed a sigh of relief after the much-awaited flyover, 8.7-kilometre-long, was made open to public in October, 2017. Even though they are thankful that the flyover has eased traffic misery in the area to some extent, there is a new nuisance: mindless dumping of garbage in the median below has turned the vicinity into an ugly scene.

At places, the median strip is seen filled with heaps of garbage dumped by roadside stores and houses, while parts of it are occupied by homeless people. It's impossible to miss the overpowering stench emitting from the decomposing garbage.

College student Russell Zaman, who

commutes regularly on the route, said: "The flyover above is quite clean, but the median right below is a disgusting sight."

"It's almost been a year since the flyover was completed. But underneath, there's trash all around. It looks so revolting, but it seems that there's no one responsible to keep the area clean," said Sayeda Jahan, 45, a resident of the area.

Some traders also keep broiler chicken in numerous coops under the flyover. Faeces from the chicken are also contributing to the foul odour and pollution.

"Chicken vendors are polluting the area underneath the flyover during the daytime. The smell remains in the area even after it is cleaned by workers of the city corporation," said a local, preferring not to be named.

There are multiple dumpsters underneath the flyover as well, but those were also seen overflowing.

During a recent visit to the area, in Ward 35 of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), this correspondent came across a makeshift office

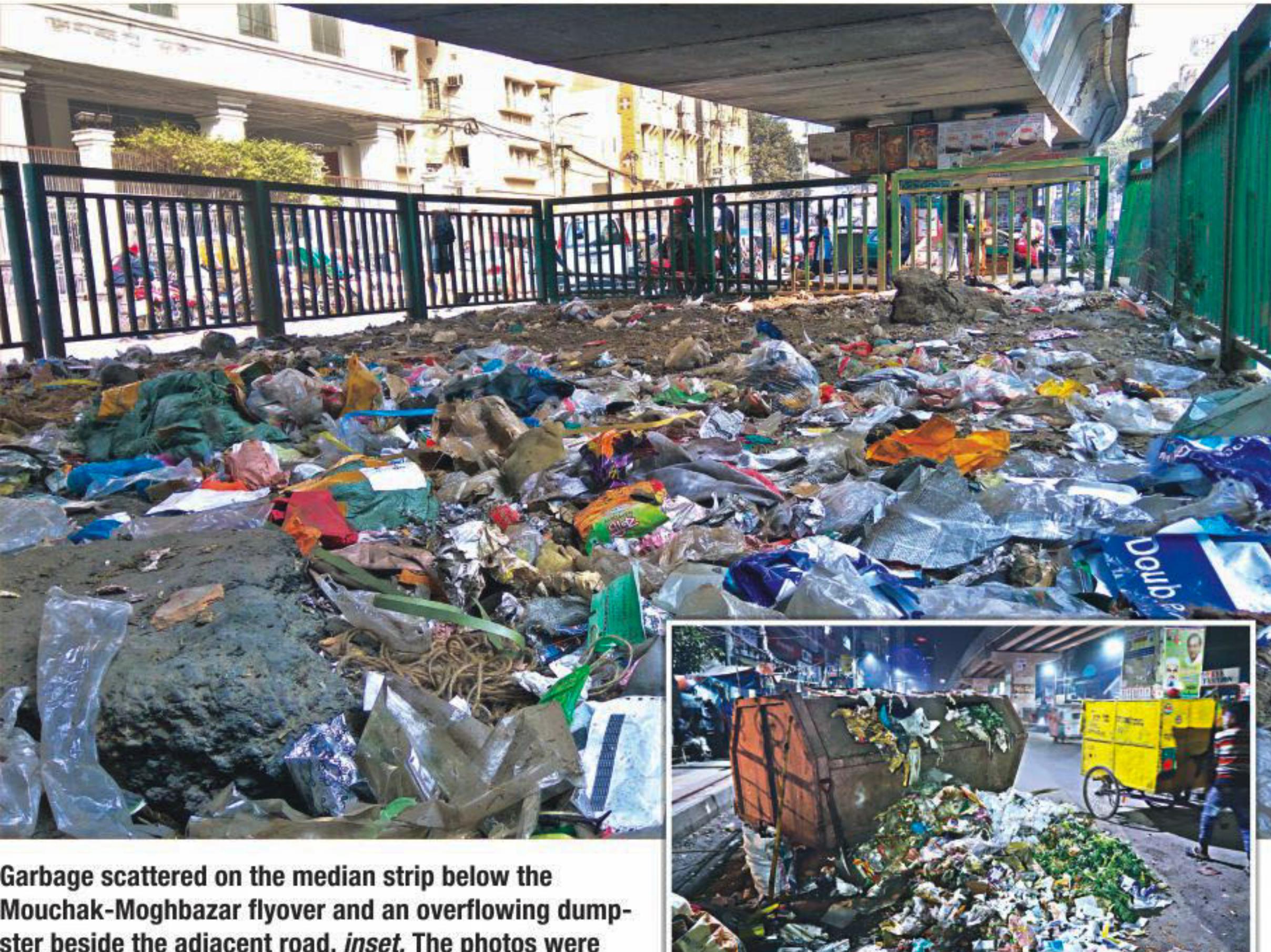
where cleaners of DNCC store their cleaning utensils.

When asked about the sorry state of the median below the flyover, cleaner Mohammad Faruk said, "We collect garbage from under the flyover as much as we can every day. But people from both sides of the road keep on dumping waste there."

Faruk's claim proved to be true as the correspondent witnessed a storekeeper dumping trash in the median strip. Asked why he was doing that, he sheepishly responded: "The place is already dirty. So, we often throw our garbage there."

Contacted over phone about the matter, local DNCC Councillor MD Mokhtar Sardar said, "The Public Works Department handed over the flyover to the mayor [of DNCC] only a couple of days before the parliamentary election [December 30]. The mayor is yet to hand it over to us. Once he hands it over to us, we'll be able to take necessary steps."

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Garbage scattered on the median strip below the Mouchak-Moghazar flyover and an overflowing dumpster beside the adjacent road, inset. The photos were taken last week.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON, SK ENAMUL HAQ



RELIVING CHILDHOOD MEMORIES... People of all ages enjoy a day of flying kites at Suhrawardy Udyana in Dhaka yesterday, as part of a "Ghuri Utsab" (kite festival), organised by "Gagan".

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

ILLEGAL ESTABLISHMENTS Free up all roads in a week: Quader

AGENCIES, Gazipur

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to remove all the illegal establishments along roads and highways across the country within a week.

The minister came up with the directive while visiting Dhaka-Tangail highway at Chandra in the district.

"I'm giving top priority to bringing back discipline on roads and highways after taking charge of the ministry in the fresh term... The illegal establishments on the roads and highways will be removed within seven days from the day of serving notice," he told the reporters while visiting construction work of a flyover in Thirumore area at Chandra in Kaliakoir upazila of the district, reports BSS.

Quader, also general secretary of Awami League, said, "We decided to conduct eviction drives to remove illegal establishments... I also gave order to the authorities concerned today in this regard. No illegal parking will be allowed."

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Dipu Moni warns edu instts against charging extra fees

UNB, Chandpur

Strict measures would be taken against educational institutions if they charge students extra fees, newly-appointed Education Minister Dipu Moni said yesterday.

She issued the warning while exchanging post-polls greetings in Chandpur Sadar upazila in the afternoon.

The minister said charging excessive fees for examination was an offense. "Steps will be taken against educational institutions if we get evidence of realising extra fees," she said. "We are ready to face challenges and do everything required to ensure quality education."

Additional Deputy Commissioner Shawkat Osman, Sadar Upazila Executive Officer Kaniz Fatema, Additional Superintendent of Police Jahid Parvez Chowdhury, district Awami League President Nasir Uddin Ahmed, General Secretary Abu Naeem Patwari Dulal and Vice President JR Wadud Tipu were also present at the event.

Meanwhile, on the occasion of Bangabandhu's homecoming on Thursday, Dipu Moni said the nation's founding father was harmed more by enemies from inside the country than those in Pakistan.

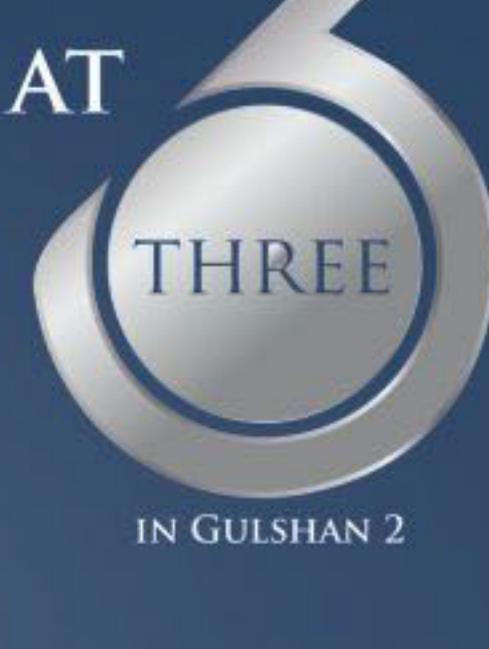
She said Bangalees could not relish their independence until Bangabandhu returned home.

"His return was a fortunate event for us but local and foreign enemies killed him along with his family," she said. "They feared that Bangladesh would move forward under his strong leadership."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, daughter of Bangabandhu, survived as she was abroad at the time when Bangabandhu and most of his family members were assassinated, she said. "She [Hasina] is taking the country forward at an unstoppable speed and Bangladesh is turning into a 'golden Bangladesh' as envisioned by Bangabandhu," the minister added.

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