



Historic 7th March today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"My brothers, I come before you today with a heavy heart."

And so began what would go on to become immortal words which would resonate throughout the annals of history, changing its course forever.

It was the afternoon of March 7 1971, the day when the undisputed leader of the Bangalee nation led the nation across the political Rubicon.

Clad in a white panjabi and

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Excavators of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority working on reclaiming a large part of the Buriganga river illegally filled-up by a real estate company in Bosila area of the capital.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



'There's an attack on all forms of intelligence'

Author Arundhati Roy, in a conversation with The Daily Star's editor Mahfuz Anam, Sushmita S Preetha and Moyukh Mahtab on March 4 spoke about her books and childhood, the global and regional political scenario, the role of writers, and the importance of dissent. About Kashmir, she referred to her recently published powerful piece for the Huffington Post, which this paper printed on March 5.

Everything you write is so brilliant—how do you manage?

Well, I can't answer that question without sounding immodest. To be honest, I don't feel like I have to write, or write a certain amount. I only write when something really persuades me to. I was joking with a friend that in June there's going to be a new book of collected essays coming out, called *My Seditious Heart*, and isn't it strange that three books are my life's work? It doesn't seem to be a lot. In an odd way, I am not a very ambitious person. But I am ambitious about my art when I do it. To intervene in small ways, like my recent *Huffington Post* article. I wasn't going to do it, but then I spent a couple of nights unable to shut my eyes thinking how everybody is talking about everything except what ought to be spoken about. It's shameful. Then you just can't settle until you do it.

We are curious about your childhood. How did the circumstances in which you grew up shape your choice of issues and your passions?

First of all, maybe I have something to do with you, because my father's family is from Bangladesh. But I actually never knew him. My mother is from Kerala, and they were separated when I was just one year old and I never knew anything about that part of my family for a long time. In Kerala, my mother comes from a very small, traditional community, the Syrian Christians. Unlike the rest of the Christians in India, they are a very closed elite community and very conservative.

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Dragged down by directors

Once very healthy, AB Bank now ailing; loan scams, influence of directors, mismanagement to blame

JEBUN NESA ALO

The burden of a dead mobile operator, widespread loan fraudulence, mismanagement and influence of a sponsor director were what dragged the once sound AB Bank into the reds.

It was the first private bank in the country making good profits. In fact, AB Bank topped the listed banks in the stock market in terms of earning in 2009.

But the bank suffered a free-fall in 2017 when its profits dried up to an extent that it failed to announce dividend for its shareholders and crash-landed from category A to Z -- a category for poorly performing companies.

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KEY POINTS

- At the core of the trouble is the Tk 705cr loan to Citycell, a dead telco company
- Despite Citycell's failure to pay back, AB Bank's board offered it undue benefits
- Another Tk 500 crore siphoned abroad by two directors of the bank
- The bank now faces liquidity crisis, thanks to aggressive lending, erosion of deposits

No toy gun this time!

Scanner at Dhaka airport fails to detect a pistol and 10 bullets in the handbag of actor Ilias Kanchan

RASHIDUL HASAN

Questions are being raised about the security at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport after a handbag containing a firearm passed through the scanners undetected on Tuesday.

The security breach took place within two weeks of an attempted hijack of a Biman aircraft by a suspect carrying a toy gun.

On Tuesday, despite the scanning, no flag was raised about the pistol and bullets in the handbag of popular film star and road safety campaigner Ilias Kanchan who was flying to Chattogram from the HSIA.

The actor, aged over 60, told The Daily Star yesterday that he forgot about the firearm and put the handbag in the scanner.

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Condition of Quader 'improving'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Condition of Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader is improving gradually, said a Bangladeshi physician, citing a medical board examining him at Singapore's Mount Elizabeth Hospital.

"All the parameters show that condition of Obaidul Quader is improving day by day," said Dr Abu Nasar Rizvi, a professor at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

Rizvi was talking after yesterday's briefing of the medical board, headed by Dr Koh Siam Soon Philip,

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