

Nation observes Bangabandhu's birth anniversary

UNB, Dhaka

The 99th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and National Children's Day was observed yesterday in a befitting manner with various socio-political and cultural organisations holding diverse programmes across the country.

Ruling Awami League and political and socio-cultural organisations placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu, and offered munajat seeking eternal peace of his departed soul.

People from all walks of life thronged Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at the capital's Dhanmondi, and made a vow to work together following Bangabandhu's ideals. The day was a public holiday.

On this day in 1920, the nation's architect was born in Tungipara of Gopalganj.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid homage to Bangabandhu by placing wreaths at his grave there. Afterwards, they stood in solemn silence for

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Abul Mansur Ahmad's 40th anniversary of death today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 40th death anniversary of Abul Mansur Ahmad, a renowned litterateur, journalist, and politician of the sub-continent. He died in 1979.

One of the greatest satirists of Bangla literature, Abul Mansur Ahmad was a renowned politician, lawyer and journalist. He was a pioneer of modern and progressive journalism. He worked for prominent newspapers such as Krishak, Nabajug, Sultan, and Mohammadi, and was editor of the Kolkata-based Daily Ittehad from 1946 to 1948.

He wrote about the language issue from early forties and contributed to the Language Movement as the editor of Ittehad.

Abul Mansur Ahmad played a key role in the formation of Awami Muslim League. He served as vice-president of the organisation from 1953 to 1958.

He was the author of the famous Ekush Dafa (21-point programme) election manifesto of Jukta Front (a grand coalition of the three giants of our politics -- Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq, Maulana Bhashani and

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Children place flowers at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the capital's Dhanmondi-32 yesterday, marking the 99th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation. Inset, Rafiqur Rahman, a photojournalist during Bangabandhu's period, takes visitors to his photo exhibition at Jatiya Press Club on the occasion.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS, AMRAN HOSSAIN



Motijheel, Dhanmondi, Uttara to get circular bus services: DMP chief

STAR REPORT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia yesterday said circular bus services will be introduced within April in Motijheel, Dhanmondi and Uttara areas, to ease the city's traffic situation.

He made the promise while inaugurating DMP's traffic week at the Saarc Fountain in the capital's Karwan Bazar area yesterday morning, UNB reports.

The traffic week will continue till March 23.

The DMP chief said he has already talked to the mayors of Dhaka North City Corporation and Dhaka South City Corporation to this end. "With their cooperation, bus services will be run by six companies. The process has already started."

Mentioning that work on mass

rapid transit (MRT), bus rapid transit (BRT) and elevated expressway is underway, which will be completed within two years, he said the entire traffic scenario will change once those are opened.

Asaduzzaman Mia said an awareness programme will be carried out extensively so that people use foot-bridges, underpasses and zebra crossings to reduce the number of accidents.

He also said the DMP Traffic Division is working in coordination with the two city corporations, Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA), Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) to ease the traffic situation and bring back discipline on roads in the city.

"If anyone breaks traffic rules and causes difficulties for the public, then

stern action will be taken against them regardless of their status in society," said Asaduzzaman.

The city police boss requested all including politicians, high profile businesspersons, bureaucrats, lawyers and other elites of society to maintain traffic rules to bring discipline in the streets, reports our staff correspondent.

Besides, the commissioner requested everyone including drivers to maintain traffic rules and warned them against using mobile phones while driving.

The DMP commissioner also urged vehicle owners to ensure all the paperwork of their vehicles were up-to-date.

DMP has announced of holding a traffic week every month, as part of its efforts to improve the city's traffic management.

BNP threatens movement if gas price is hiked

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday warned that the party will not accept any gas price hike, as it will only inflict sufferings on people.

"Our position is clear about the government's move to hike gas prices. Neither we nor the country's people will accept it," he said.

Fakhrul was addressing a press conference at BNP's Nayapaltn central office after a joint meeting of the party and its associate bodies.

He also threatened that the party will take all-out protest programmes if the gas tariffs are increased.

About the Bangladesh part of US State Department's annual country report on human rights practices, the BNP leader said it has depicted the real scenario of the country's human rights situation and December 30 polls.

The report released on March 13 said unlawful or political killings, forced disappear-

ances, life-threatening prison conditions, limitation of freedom of speech, and many other issues were the most significant human rights problems in Bangladesh last year.

The report termed the December 30 parliamentary election a "lopsided" one and said it was considered to be marred by irregularities, including ballot-box stuffing and intimidation of opposition polling agents and voters.

Fakhrul said not only the US State Department but also all other global media outlets, including CNN, BBC, Al Jazeera, The Guardian and The Washington Post clearly said it was not an election at all. "They also said people's opinion and desire were not reflected in the polls as they couldn't cast their votes."

The BNP leader said even Indian media depicted what happened in the election.

He alleged that Bangladeshi media could not properly report on the election due to a

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A splash of colours on walls of Tejgaon

DNCC Mayor Atiql launches programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The road near Tejgaon truck stand used to be clogged up with trucks, as truckers would completely choke the vital link road to use it as a parking lot. The road was dirty, unsafe and not pedestrian-friendly.

But a drastic change came in 2015 when late mayor Annisul Huq confronted the truckers, cleared the road up from illegal parking and made it suitable for commuters, setting up footpaths and road dividers.

Some 15 months after the death of Annisul, his successor in office has come forward to clear the road of illegal parking and beautify it.

The walls on both sides of the road, stretching from Tejgaon level crossing to Satrastra crossing, are full of murals, giving the area a new look.

Around 180 students of fine arts of different universities drew the murals yesterday. Some 700 students of different schools joined them.

The murals depict the March 7 speech of

Bangabandhu, nature and rural life, Jatiya Smriti Shoudho, Central Shaheed Minar, Padma Bridge, Bangabandhu satellite, pollution and tree plantation.

"We want to make people aware to keep the city clean, and I have chosen the area as part of my first assignment on garbage management," said Atiql Islam, the newly elected DNCC mayor at a special programme on garbage management and wall painting at Tejgaon, initiated by Dhaka North City Corporation.

He said they have chosen the day as it is the 99th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and also National Children's Day.

Atiql sought commitment from truckers and residents of the area to keep the road and area clean, and free from illegal parking.

"I am very happy to be here," said Monir Hossain, a student of Shanta Pratibandhi Primary School, who was waiting to take part in mural-painting, along with another student of the school Mehedi Hasan.



Students draw murals of Bangabandhu on walls, stretching from Tejgaon level crossing to Satrastra, yesterday. The wall paintings were part of a special programme initiated by Dhaka North City Corporation to keep the area clean and free from illegal parking.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

With a little help

Police official's initiatives behind Bede community turnaround

SHARIFUL ISLAM and AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH

Life was not kind to Shajenur Begum, a member of the 'Bede' (a nomadic ethnic group) community in Savar, when she had to make a living off snake-charming and selling amulets.

But with a little help, Shajenur is much better off now, providing education to her three children.

Her turnaround started in 2015 when the 35-year-old started work in a garments factory, a kind of profession not too many people of her community undertake.

"Now I live with dignity, like others in society," said Shajenur.

Shajenur's is not an isolated story. About 300 people from the community, on the outskirts of Dhaka, have also been connected to the mainstream, thanks to efforts by former Dhaka SP Habibur Rahman since 2014.

In a conversation with The Daily Star, Habibur, now a deputy inspector general at the Police Headquarters, shared what inspired him to work for the underprivileged community.

After being appointed as superintendent of police for Dhaka district in October 2014, Habibur took measures to curb crimes, particularly trade of contraband drug yaba at Savar Bede Polli, one of the largest gypsy colonies of the country housing some 15,000

residents. Though the crime rates fell in other areas, the scene in the Bede polli remained unchanged, Habibur recalled. "I visited the area, held meetings with my officers and decided to include Bede community leaders to hear their suggestions on reducing crimes. Fifteen leaders from as many clans joined the meeting."

The leaders told the then SP that their people faced financial hardships, pushing them towards drug abuse and trade. It would continue unless alternative

jobs were created, especially for the women and younger people.

They said they were hit hard by poverty and could not sail out to other areas due to drying rivers. Moreover, people were losing interest in the traditional Bede livelihoods like snake-charming, monkey show, magic tricks etc.

"Their stories moved me. As a citizen and as a police officer, I decided to do whatever I could to help these people," said Habibur.

"I personally went to government

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Members of the Bede community working at an RMG factory.

PHOTO: STAR

Journalist found dead in Pallabi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A journalist was found dead at his residence in Dhaka's Pallabi area yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Shafiqul Alam Raza, former chief reporter of Bangla online news portal priyo.com and also a popular Bhawaiya singer.

Raza, who used to live alone at the house, returned home early yesterday around 3:30am, said Imranul Islam, officer-in-charge of Pallabi Police Station.

His housemaid came at noon and knocked on the door for a while, but there was no response. Then, she informed the neighbours who contacted police in this regard, the OC said.

Police later broke open the door and recovered Raza's body.

He was a former journalist of Bangla daily newspapers Jugantor and Dainik Orthonita, an enlisted singer of Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar, and the director of Kalatan, a music school in Pallabi.

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