



FREEDOM IN THE AIR... On Independence Day yesterday, the nation paid homage to the bravest souls who made supreme sacrifice for the country's freedom. **Clockwise from left,** In Sylhet, the day started with students placing wreaths at Central Shaheed Minar. The administration organised various events throughout the day, including dance performances and parades by students at the district stadium.



PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

President, PM pay homage to Liberation War martyrs

BSS, Savar

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid rich tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War at the National Memorial in Savar yesterday, marking Independence Day.

The president first placed a wreath at the altar of the memorial in the morning, followed by the prime minister.

After placing the wreaths, the president and prime minister stood in solemn silence for a while as a mark of profound respect to the memories of the martyrs.

A smartly turned-out contingent drawn from Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force presented a state salute on the occasion while bugles played the last post.

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, members of the cabinet, PM's advisers, parliament members, deputy speaker, chiefs of the three services, freedom fighters, diplomats, and high civil and military officials were present.

Later, flanked by senior leaders of Awami League, Sheikh Hasina, president of the party, placed another wreath at the memorial.

Wreaths were also placed by Jatiya Party Co-Chairperson Raushan Ershad and Secretary General Moshir Rahman Ranga.

Mayors of Dhaka south and north city corporations Sayeed Khokon and Atiqul Islam also paid homage to the martyrs by placing wreaths separately.

'Unity can resist autocracy'

Dr Kamal calls for movement to restore people's rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Oikyafront Convener Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said people of the country have to be united to restore their rights and a democratic governing system.

"We have been on a movement and we must continue to unite people to get rid of the prevailing situation of the country and restore their rights," he said.

Dr Kamal was talking to reporters after paying homage to the Liberation War martyrs at National Martyr's Memorial in Savar, marking Independence Day.

The Gono forum president said the nation got independence and constitution, and introduced a democratic governing system through movements. "But we must consolidate the unity of people and carry

out a movement to make the democratic governing system functional."

The veteran constitutional expert said people are the owner of the state. "Those who deprived people of their ownership of the country have committed an anti-constitutional and anti-liberation act."

"We will have to carry out a united movement so that no one can deprive us of our rights," said Dr Kamal.

When his attention was drawn to BNP's allegation of restoration of "one-party rule" by the current government, Dr Kamal said people's unity can resist autocracy, reports UNB.

He also said people are the root of all power. "Those who want to deprive people of such power create divisions. We all must wage a united movement to completely get rid of the prevailing situation."



A fun day with colours

Children's art competition at Fantasy Kingdom

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

An art competition for children was held at Fantasy Kingdom Complex in Ashulia yesterday.

The event titled "Polar Ice Cream Moner Sukhe Aaki" was organised by Concord Entertainment Ltd and Dhaka Ice Cream Industries Ltd.

A total of 1,200 children -- aged five to sixteen -- participated in three groups, with 400 in each group. They also enjoyed free rides at the theme park.

Renowned artist Mustafa Monowar and a group of experienced teachers and students from Dhaka University's Faculty of Fine Arts were present as judges.

Thirty participants received awards, and nine received medals. Certificates and crests were distributed among winners.

Gold medal awardees are: Farina Jahan Arpita, Al-Mominul, and Sakib Hossen.

Artist Mustafa Monowar advised children to continue practicing art alongside formal education.

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CCC conservancy workers exposed to skin diseases

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Some garbage collectors of Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) are blaming the corporation for various skin diseases they suffer from, as it does not give them any protective gear.

Md Hridoy, a worker of CCC's conservancy unit, was found scratching his hands while collecting garbage in front of the Almas Cinema Hall in Dampara earlier this month.

He had no protective gear on.

Asked about the itching, Hridoy told this correspondent that the CCC appointed him almost a year ago but never gave him any protective gear.

"I have been suffering from itching for the last six months as I work with no gloves," said Hridoy, who works for daily wages.

Similar picture was seen at Askar Dighir Par, Shahid Saifuddin Khaled Road, KB Aman Ali Road in Bakalia, Aturar Depot Bazar, Katalganj, and KB Fazlul Quader Road areas in the port city.

Md Shuvo, another worker of the CCC conservancy department, said, "Safety gears are necessary to protect us from contagious diseases but authorities are yet to provide us with those. Our job is not permanent. So we cannot raise our voice."

Shuvo gets Tk 324 a day for collecting waste from households. He carries the garbage in a van and dumps them on a CCC truck at Dampara.

The city corporation launched its door-to-door garbage collection service in January 2017. The port city dwellers produce around 2,000 tonnes of waste every day, according to sources at CCC.

At present, 3,500 people are working at the CCC conservancy department. Barnali Barua, assistant professor at the Department of Dermatology, Chattogram Medical College Hospital, said people who do such work might become vulnerable to skin diseases like dermatitis, if they continue working without protective gear.

About workers' allegations, Shafiqul

Mannan Siddique, chief conservancy officer at CCC, said, "We gave them gloves, goggles, boots and other safety equipment several years ago but they were never interested in using them. They said they could not work comfortably wearing those."

He admitted that the workers, who were recruited in the last two years for the door-to-door service, were yet to get the equipment. "We will distribute them very soon."

Echoing Mannan, CCC Chief Executive Officer Mohammad Shamsuddoha said, "The conservancy workers were given safety equipment on several occasions since 2008 but they were reluctant to use those. We will make it mandatory for them."

However, the conservancy workers brushed off the officials' claims.

This correspondent talked to at least 10 garbage collectors assigned at different zones and they said they were never given protective gear. Most of them have been working for 10-12 years.

Shun negativity for the sake of nation building

Info minister urges political parties

BSS, Dhaka

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday urged all political parties to discard negative politics in the interest of nation building.

The minister was addressing an event, marking Independence Day, in the capital.

"Let's work together to build a developed and prosperous Bangladesh imbued with the spirit of the Liberation War," he said at Department of Films and Publications (DFP) discussion, chaired by its Director General Mohammad Ishtaque Hossain.

"We want constructive criticism... blind and one-sided criticism is undesirable," said the minister.

"Today, on Independence Day, we should promise to build a developed, affluent and non-communal Bangladesh. We've to build 'Sonar Bangla' as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," said Hasan, also publicity and publication secretary of the ruling Awami League.

The minister said Bangladesh is now a role model of development in the world.

The country's development would get momentum if BNP, Jatiya Oikyafront and other political parties joined these uplift activities by keeping away their negative politics, said Dr Mahmud.

He, however, criticised BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir for his comments, saying the party's politics were now visibly stuck on the issue of releasing BNP chief Khaleda Zia, who was convicted by a court.

"They rather should have promised today to materialise the dream of freedom fighters... I hope they [BNP] will return to positive politics," Hasan added.

He also paid rich tributes to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members who were assassinated on August 15, 1975.

Additional Secretary to the Information Ministry Azharul Haque, Press Information Department Principal Information Officer Md Jakir Hossain and DFP Director SM Golam Kibria, among others, addressed the discussion.

Earlier, a documentary by DFP on the Liberation War was screened.



Fireworks light up the sky above the river Kirtankhola in Barishal, as part of a laser light and pyrotechnics display marking Independence Day. Barishal City Corporation organised the show.

PHOTO: TITU DAS



Cyclists at a rally at Shibbari intersection in Khulna city, marking Independence Day yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Bicycle rally marking Independence Day in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A group of cyclists organised a rally in Khulna city, marking Independence Day yesterday.

More than 200 cyclists participated in the event called "Independence Ride" jointly arranged by Khulna Cyclists and Dhaka Road Table.

Led by Shariful Islam Hiron, they started pedaling from Shibbari intersection and moved towards Gollamari via Sonadanga, Moilapota, Rupsha Stand Road and Zila School areas.

Alamgir Kabir, president, district unit of Muktiyoddha Sangsad, inaugurated the programme.

Freedom fighters Munshi Aiub Ali and Abdul Jabbar, and cyclist Gazi Baharul Islam, among others, spoke at the inauguration.

Bangladesh needs to find space for wildlife: expert

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh, like many other countries, needs to find space for both the wildlife and its people keeping in mind that biodiversity is important for the world, a global wildlife expert has said.

"Everybody has a role to play," Dr Craig B Stanford, a professor of Biological Science and Anthropology at the University of Southern California, told the news agency in an interview. He said tigers, turtles and fish are important, and also very important is their protection.

He said there are many dedicated people and conservationists in Bangladesh, though many people around the world ask conservationists why they worry about these animals -- turtles and monkeys -- when there are many people who do not have food to eat.

The US professor said he is fully aware of the issues like big population density and other problems, but biodiversity is very important to the wellbeing of the planet. Highlighting the importance of having

space both for wildlife and people, he said there are many species and it is hard to even know which species is the most important one.

"If we lose them, before we understand, we've lost important things for ourselves," he said, adding that turtles are playing an important role in ecosystem.

Prof Stanford visited Chittagong Zoo and Hazrat Bayezid Bostami shrine recently, and had a very "productive" discussion at the latter on how to protect the turtles.

He talked to the shrine's caretaker conveying that he wants to help protect the turtles.

The shrine is largely dependent on the turtles, he quoted the caretaker as saying. "If the turtles disappear, the number of visitors would go down."

Farid Ahsan, a zoology professor of Chittagong University who studied these black soft-shell turtles, in his 1984 survey recorded around 320 turtles in the shrine pond. The number has declined significantly over the past decades.

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Two workers electrocuted in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two construction workers died from electrocution at an under-construction building site in Siddheshwari area of Dhaka early yesterday.

Anisur Rahman, 36, and his co-worker Abul Bashar, 52, were doing piling work near Monowara Hospital around 2am, said Arif Hossain, brother of Anis.

They were electrocuted as the piling pipe somehow got electrified as it was connected to a live wire, he said.

On information, police recovered the bodies and sent those to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy, said Inspector Bachchu Miah, in-charge of Dhaka Medical College Hospital police outpost.