

A footbridge near Dhanmondi Road-4 and central reservation on Mirpur Road has been decorated with colourful lights yesterday to mark the 70th founding anniversary of ruling Awami League today.

PHOTO:  
AMRAN HOSSAIN

## AL turns 70 today

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at 8:30am by placing of wreaths at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi.

Separately, a delegation of Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) led by Presidium Member Lt Col (ret) Muhammad Faruq Khan will pay homage at the mausoleum of Bangabandhu at Tungipara in Gopalganj at 11:00am.

The delegation includes ALCWC member Abul Hasnat Abdullah,

Agriculture and Cooperatives Secretary Faridunnahar Laily, Religious Affairs Secretary Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Labour and Manpower Affairs Secretary Habibur Rahman Siraj, and ALCWC members SM Kamal Hossain and Marufa Akhter Popi.

On the occasion, national and party flags will be kept hoisted atop all party offices.

In addition, a discussion meeting will be held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka at 4:00pm tomorrow.

Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will preside over the discussion.

AL Presidium Member and 14-party alliance spokesman Mohammed Nasim said the Awami League is not only the oldest and biggest political party in the country but also the mainstream political organisation carrying democratic and secular ideals.

The Awami League has led the national movement for emancipation of the Bengalees, and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the first

to initiate the work to build a secular Bangladesh, he said.

Historian, writer and folklorist Shamsuzzaman Khan said the Awami League became an immensely popular political party by carrying out movements, struggles and protests against repression, exploitation and subjugation by West Pakistani rulers on the Banglaee nation and other small ethnic groups. The sacrifice of AL leaders and workers and their contributions to the nation will be remembered forever, he added.

## In silence, they perish

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a silent death.

While infant mortality due to infectious diseases has declined over the last three decades by around 71 percent, more children are likely to be diagnosed with non-communicable diseases, including cancer, as they reach the age where it is likely to happen.

The study found a sharp increase in the incidences of childhood cancer from 2001 to 2014. The latest figure is still high -- 5,500 to 6,700 new cases below 15 years annually -- compared to the estimated childhood cancer incidences in other lower- and middle-income nations, including India.

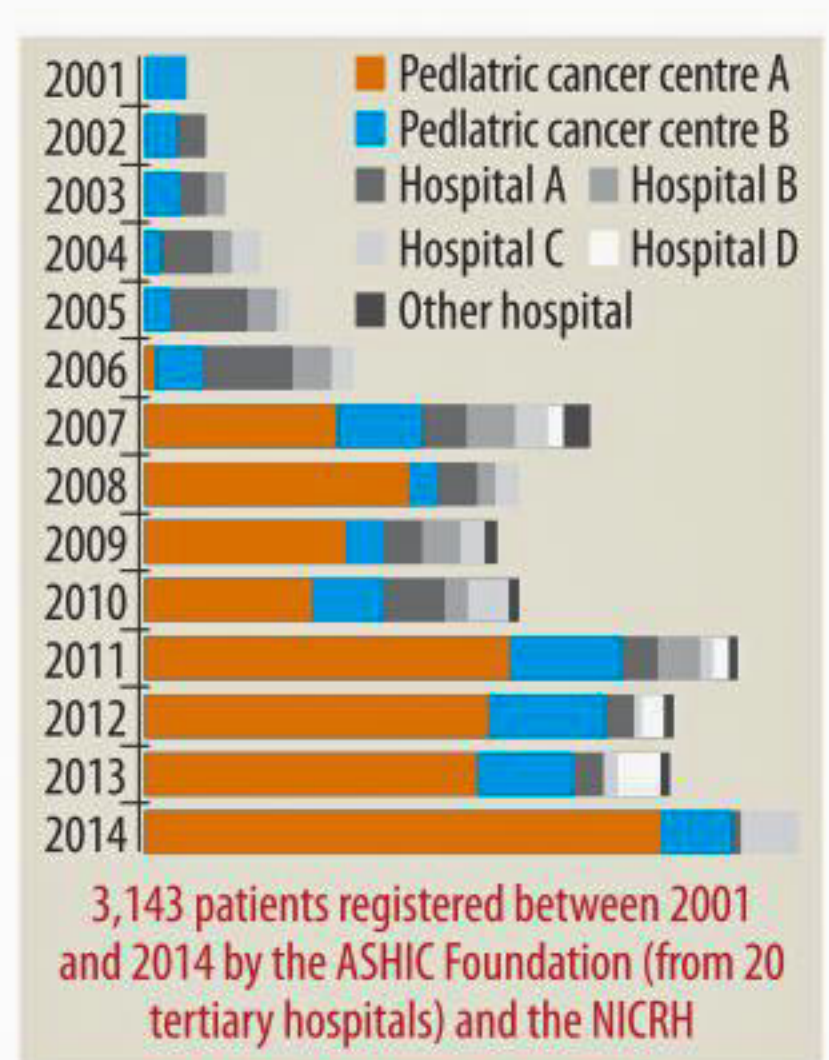
The report concludes that childhood cancer is expected to increase in developing countries by 30 percent by next year, influenced by declining infant mortality rate and population growth.

Bangladesh, however, does not have the infrastructure to cope with such a change.

The burden of childhood cancer here remains unknown because of a lack of awareness among clinicians and the population, inadequate healthcare facilities and the non-existence of cancer registries, as suggested by the 2016 report.

Meanwhile, many parents, like Kabir, go broke while trying to mobilise the resources available to save their children.

Others seek alternatives like herbal treatment and homeopathy when



they cannot afford or get access to facilities in the handful of public hospitals offering specialised care, said Prof Zohora Jameela Khan, of the paediatric hematology and oncology department in Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

**EXPENSIVE TREATMENT**  
Estimating the cost, Zohora said it was Tk 5-6 lakh at the lowest for a patient beginning treatment at three years. "If the patient suffers infection frequently, the cost goes up."

No less alarming is that five to seven patients are refused treatment every day for the lack of logistics at the 17-bed paediatric cancer unit of the DMCH.

The situation is similar or worse

at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU). The autonomous institute sees 15 to 20 patients compete for one seat, with the capacity to accommodate no more than 35 inpatients at a time.

The treatment cost at the BSMMU is much more than that in the DMCH, since patients don't get anything for free except food, bed and doctors' visits, said Momena Begum, of the paediatric oncology department at the BSMMU.

Overall, the country has only eight public hospitals with the required set-up -- five of them are in Dhaka, including the National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital, the lone public hospital specialised for cancer patients.

### POOR INFRASTRUCTURE LEADS TO POOR RESULTS

Access to affordable cancer care, however, can make a whole lot of difference, Zohora said, adding, if the diagnosis is done early and complete treatment given then "childhood cancer is curable in 80 percent of the cases".

At the DMCH, 53 percent of those who undergo treatment get cured while 50-60 percent patients at the BSMMU get back a near-normal life following treatment. The figures exclude those who don't continue treatment or reject it.

The existing over-crowded infrastructure also affects the outcome of medical procedures.

Medical experts say cancer patients

require complete isolation for strict control of infection. But the hospitals have to accommodate more patients than what they can, increasing the risk of infection, which in turn hinders the progress in treatment and leads to additional spending on tackling infection.

And tackling infection is more expensive than routine cancer treatment.

Things would change with financial support from the government and infrastructural development, said Momena, of BSMMU.

If more facilities are set up, more doctors will be encouraged to take up specialised courses in paediatric oncology, Zohora said, referring to the fact that the country has only about 23 paediatric oncologists.

Meanwhile, Nayan's father Kabir is weighed down by debts.

Every time he comes to Dhaka from Mehendiganj of Barishal for follow-up medical procedures, he borrows from relatives and neighbours.

The father, who now earns a living by looking over accounts at a fishing market for Tk 400 a day, knows that he cannot let up.

### India survive

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with four fours, but was caught by Shah off the bowling of Nabi.

Kedar Jadhav reached his fifty off 66 balls, giving the scorecard a look of respectability and the total ultimately proved just too much for Afghanistan.

## 56pc come from

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"Besides, the arrestees had different social backgrounds. They did not belong to any particular social group," he said.

To fight the menace of militancy, Moniruzzaman suggested all-out efforts from families and educational institutions. "If we don't take immediate steps, we will find ourselves in big trouble," he said.

He also said the ATU had taken initiatives to arrange youth campaigns and other awareness programmes in schools and colleges and hold meetings with religious leaders for the delivery of sermons against all kinds of violent activities.

"It is a continuous process," he said.

ATU DIG Didar Ahmed gave the welcome speech at the seminar attended by around 100 students of different schools, colleges, madrasas and universities.

Speaking there, Prof Fuad Hassan Mallick of Brac School of Design described terrorism as a man-made disaster.

Saiful Islam, deputy commissioner of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit, said the media should avoid any language that glorifies terrorists. It should rather focus on the ordeal of the terror-attack victims and their families.

Around 13.45 percent of the country's people read daily newspapers, 12.4 percent listen to

radio, 84 percent watch television and 18 percent people use social media, he said, citing a research.

He also said militants tried to spread three video clips and 90,000 other contents online every day to draw media attention. So the media should be more watchful in this regard, he said.

Mohammad Abul Kashem, additional inspector general of the ATU, said they would try their best to form a militancy-free country with support and cooperation of all.

Earl R Miller, US ambassador to Bangladesh; Penny Morton, acting high commissioner of the Australian High Commission; and Kanbar Hossein Bor, acting high commissioner of the British High Commission, among others, spoke at the seminar.

## Man dies

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to Brahmanbaria General Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Meanwhile, his son Nayeem Islam, 28, had been arrested over the rape and murder of his teenage sister-in-law at Astagram village under Talshahor Purbo union of Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila yesterday morning, said Atiqur Rahman, inspector (investigation) of Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station.

The victim's mother had filed a murder case with the station. After being picked up by police, Nayeem confessed to the crime.

## Less than 1pc

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crore between September 2015 and December 2018. During the same time, the number loan defaulters increased to 58,436.

Experts were quick to point out that publishing the list will do no good and suggested that the government take concrete action to recover the loan.

Last year, the government placed a list of 100 defaulters in parliament, said Khondker Ibrahim Khaled, a former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank.

But those defaulters have not faced any action yet, he added.

"The finance minister may reveal another list of defaulters next year. At the time, he should also place report as to whether any punitive measure has been taken against the defaulters," he said.

Also, the list of 300 defaulters does not depict the real picture of the banking sector, he noted.

"The finance minister has not revealed the names of some influential persons who secured stay orders from the High Court on their defaulter status. A large amount of loans is with them," he said, adding that the government should publish their names too.

According to Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute, publishing the list would not change things much.

"There might be a psychological impact on the defaulters, but it will not help recover the defaulted loans," he said.

The parliament should give a clear directive on how to realise the money, said Mansur, also a former economist at the International Monetary Fund.

"Assets of the habitual defaulters should be confiscated and the defaulters should be sent to jail. They should also be declared ineligible for rescheduling their loans as is the practice in developed countries," he added.

The list placed in parliament includes names of some widely discussed loan scammers like Crescent Leather Products Ltd and Hall-Mark Fashion whose defaulted loans amount to Tk 341 crore.

Bismillah Towels Limited, which is also a major defaulter, has a bad loan worth Tk 244 crore. Rupayan Housing Estate is among the top 50 defaulters. Its total loan is Tk 2,108 crore, of which Tk 280 crore is defaulted loan.

State-run Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation is also among the top 50 defaulters. Its total

### TOP 10 DEFAULTERS

(In crore tk)

Samannaz Super Oil	1,049
Galaxy Sweater & Yarn Dyeing	984
Rimex Footwear	976
Quantum Power Systems	828
Maheen Enterprise	825
Rupali Composite Leather Wear	798
Crescent Leather	776
S A Oil Refinery	707
Suprov Composit Knit	610
Grameen Shakti	601

### OUTSTANDING LOANS OF TOP 10 BORROWERS

(In crore tk)

BRAC	7,932
Beximco Ltd	6,044
Nitol Motors	4,870
S Alam Super Edible Oil	4,286
Chemical Industries Corporation	4,057
S Alam Vegetable Oil	3,505
Sugar and Food Industries Corporation	2,887
BADC	2,707
S Alam Refined Sugar Industries	2,617
BURO Bangladesh	2,604

loan stands at Tk 2,887 crore, with Tk 352 crore classified as bad loan.

In the last three years alone, 60,000 borrowers were added to the list of loan defaulters.

In December 2018, the total bad loans stood at Tk 1,02,315 crore, up from Tk 59,105 in September 2015, the finance minister said.

During the same time, the number of loan defaulters soared to 1,70,390 from 1,11,954.

Six companies of S Alam Group have taken Tk 15,018 crore in loan from various banks. The companies are S Alam Super Edible Oil, S Alam Vegetable Oil, S Alam Refined Sugar Industries, S Alam Cold Roll Steel, S Alam Trade Co Pvt Limited and S Alam and Company.

Three companies of Beximco Group -- Beximco Limited, Beximco Pharma and Beximco LPG -- have taken Tk 7,802 crore in loan.

## Sudden death

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Lanka -- along with West Indies and Afghanistan one of the three teams Bangladesh fans were expected to beat -- that at first reduced Bangladesh's chances. England's defeat means that the three favourites -- along with India and Australia -- may not make it to the semifinals, and that opens up a place for the others. Despite needing to win all of their last three matches after a spirited loss to Australia in their last match on Thursday, the cricketers have been in a good mood and Sri Lanka's win would have contributed to that.

"Mentally, everyone is in a good place," said Bangladesh batsman Mohammad Mithun, who has lost his place in the team to Liton Das, yesterday. "We haven't played bad cricket in the tournament, we've played good cricket. Everyone is doing well and everyone is also very energised mentally."

Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Mithun, Sabbir Rahman, Abu Jayed and Mosaddek Hossain went for an optional practice session at the Bowl, where India were being given a thorough run for their money

by Afghanistan. The last name in that list should provide some succour to Bangladesh fans as Mosaddek has been a vital cog in the Bangladesh machine so far in the World Cup. More than his batting at number seven, it was his part-time off-spin that was missed against Australia during a 48-run defeat. Mosaddek missed the match because of a shoulder injury, but bowled at practice yesterday and should be fine for tomorrow's game.

There was not much positive to report about the other injury concern. Pace-bowling all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin, Bangladesh's highest wicket-taker in this World Cup, missed the match against Australia complaining of back pain. There has been debate in the media about the severity of his injury and reports of discontent within the team surrounding the issue. Team physio Thihan Chandramohan was set to file a report on Saifuddin's state yesterday.

Whoever plays, Bangladesh's sudden-death challenge begins tomorrow with the spin challenge posed by Afghanistan's spin trio of Rashid Khan, Mujeeb Ur Rahman and Mohammad Nabi.

## Housewife killed

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Camp in Mongla-Ghasiyakhali river channel of Rampal upazila.

Lutfar Rahman, OC of Rampal Police Station, said some locals caught Mustakin around 1:00am on Friday when he went to the village to meet the girl. After about six hours, the 32-year-old man was handed over to police.

The victim filed a case against the constable on Friday night.

Yesterday, a local court sent the constable to jail after he was produced before it.

In Sunamganj, police on Friday night arrested an alleged rapist in Baishakandi Bahadurpur village of Chhatak upazila during an arbitration over the alleged rape of a nine-year-old girl.

The girl was allegedly raped by the accused at her house on June 14 when her parents, both day labourers, were out at work.

Delwar Hossain, inspector (investigation) of Chhatak Police Station, said the arbitration was arranged by some influential people of the village. But some local youths informed the law enforcers and the

upazila administration about the matter.

A case was filed against the accused. In Narayanganj, police yesterday picked up two youths for allegedly raping two girls several times in the last 20 days after confining the victims to a house in Giridhara area under Fatullah Police Station.

The arrestees, Al-Amin, 22, and Riad Hossain, 25, used to live at a rented house in Fatullah.

The two began relationships with the girls who are cousins. On June 2, Al-Amin and Riad abducted the girls from Siddhirganj and took them to a house, confined them and violated the two several times, said Selim Miah, inspector of Siddhirganj Police Station.

The girls' families had informed police about them going missing. Law enforcers yesterday rescued the victims and arrested the alleged rapists after one of the victims' fathers filed a case accusing the two.

The two girls were sent to Narayanganj General Hospital for medical examinations.

Our correspondents in Rajshahi, Sylhet, Bagerhat and Narayanganj contributed to this report.

## Local workers

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there are 6,000 Bangladeshi workers in the site while only 1,500 of them were staying in their quarters yesterday.

A violent clash erupted between the Bangladeshi and the Chinese workers as Swabindra Das, 32, a Bangladeshi worker, lost his life after falling from a 70-foot tall tower on Wednesday.

The agitating Bangladeshi workers attacked the Chinese workers and vandalised the construction site of the power plant as rumors spread that Chinese workers mistakenly killed Swabindra and were trying to hide his body.

During the clash, seven workers, including five Chinese, were seriously injured.

Of the five Chinese workers, Zang Jon Seng, 26, an electrician at the power plant, died at Barishal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital on Thursday.

Wang Le Jhing, security director of Payra power plant, filed two cases with Patua-khali's Kalapara Police Station on Thursday night accusing 500 to 600 unidentified people in each.

The cases were filed over the death of Zang Jon Seng and vandalism in the construction site of Payra power plant.

The government deployed nearly 600 law enforcers in the plant area after the incident.

Meanwhile, police arrested 16 people in connection with the cases. Four of them were sent to jail on Friday after police placed them before court.

A total of 6,000 Bangladeshi and 2,700 Chinese employees work in the construction site of 1320-megawatt Payra Power Plant.

With help of the Chinese Exim Bank, that Payra power plant is being built at a cost of \$1.6 billion in Patuakhali district's Kalapara upazila.