



THE DAILY

Star

ON FRIDAY

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ZILHAJ 14, 1440 HIRI

20 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00

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President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stand in silence after placing wreaths at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on Dhanmondi Road-32 on National Mourning Day yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Nation pays glowing tribute to its hero

AGENCIES, Dhaka, Gopalganj

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had managed to establish an independent state for the Bangalees through his uncompromising struggle.

Yesterday, the nation paid rich tributes to the Father of the Nation on the occasion of his 44th martyrdom anniversary and the National Mourning Day.

People observed the Day, recalling the brutal assassination of Bangabandhu and renewing the pledge to safeguard the country's independence and sovereignty.

The government, the Awami League, different political and socio-cultural organisations, educational institutions and professional bodies observed the Day by organising various programmes, reports BSS.

The national flag was hoisted half-mast atop the offices of all government, semi-government and autonomous bodies and educational institutions.

In the morning, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid tributes to Bangabandhu by placing wreaths at his portrait in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at the capital's Dhanmondi Road-32.

After placing the wreaths, the two leaders stood there in solemn silence for some time

showing deep respect to the great leader.

A contingent of Bangladesh Armed Forces gave state salute at that time as the bugle played the last post, reports UNB.

A munajat was offered seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of those who were killed in the August 15 carnage.

After paying tributes to Bangabandhu, the PM visited the historic Dhanmondi residence of Bangabandhu, which has been turned into Bangabandhu Memorial Museum.

Following the visits by the president, the PM and other dignitaries, people from all walks of life, wearing black badges, thronged the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum to pay their respects to the Father of the Nation.

Hasina later went to the Banani graveyard and spread flower petals on the graves of the martyrs of the August 15 carnage, offered Fateha and joined a munajat there.

AL advisory council members Amir Hossain Amu, Tofail Ahmed and Rashidul Alam, presidium members Matia Chowdhury, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Muhammad Faruk Khan, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and Information Minister Hasan Mahmud, among others, were present.

The president and the PM issued separate messages on the eve of the National Mourning Day.

Bangabandhu, his spouse Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, sons Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal, and Sheikh Russell and most of his family members were killed in cold blood on August 15, 1975.

His daughters Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana had been abroad at that time.

HASINA VISITS TUNGIPARA

The prime minister arrived in Tungipara, the ancestral home of Bangabandhu, by a helicopter in the morning. She paid tributes to the Father of the Nation at his grave there.

After placing a wreath, she stood in solemn silence for some time.

Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, cabinet members, senior AL leaders, chiefs of the three services, and senior civil and military officials were present.

Hasina offered Fateha and munajat seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of the Father of the Nation, and other martyrs of the August 15 massacre.

Later, the PM, along with senior party leaders, placed another wreath at the grave on behalf of the party.

The PM, cabinet members and party leaders,

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Govt plans school meal to cut dropout

Draft policy proposes to bring all primary students under the scheme in phases; ministry to place it before cabinet soon for nod

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government is planning to provide daily school meal for all the 1.73 crore primary school students in efforts to increase attendance and reduce dropout.

The primary and mass education ministry has finalised a draft policy in this regard and will soon place it before the cabinet for approval.

The policy -- National School Meal Policy 2019 -- proposes to provide students of all the 1.34 lakh primary schools across the country with 30 percent of their daily required food intake.

"We have finalised the draft.... We will send it to the Cabinet Division for its endorsement shortly," Primary and Mass Education Secretary Akram-Al-Hossain told The Daily Star last week.

The ministry is working to start implementing the policy in phases from next year, beginning with poverty-prone regions, said Gias Uddin Ahmed, additional secretary of the ministry.

Highlighting the importance of school meal and its link to attendance, KM Enamul Hoque, deputy director of Campaign for Popular Education, said, "School meals are necessary as many children across the

country go to school in an empty stomach every day. It makes it hard for them to focus on their studies in class.

"Students will get better nutrition if they get food at schools every day. It is also a strong incentive for families to send their children to school which will help increase attendance and check dropout."

Last year, primary student attendance rate was 88 percent while dropout rate was around 20 percent, according to the Annual Primary School Census 2018.

The World Food Program (WFP) in a statement in April noted that micronutrient deficiencies present a huge challenge to Bangladesh, with economic losses to malnutrition estimated at \$1 billion per year.

Once the policy is implemented, it will minimise students' short-term hunger, create a more positive learning environment and allow students to better concentrate in classrooms, ministry officials said.

WHAT'S IN THE POLICY?

The policy proposes to provide students hot meals five days a week and fortified biscuits one day.

To ensure minimum dietary diversity, meals will be prepared with fortified rice,

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Condition of Bhola gang rape victim unchanged

Taken to DMCH for better treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The sixth grader allegedly gangraped in Bhola on Sunday evening has still been bleeding from wounds.

"Her condition remains unchanged and we are providing her treatment.... We will go for forensic exams after her health improves," said Bilkis Begum, coordinator of One Stop Crisis Centre at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The 12-year-old girl was brought to the DMCH early yesterday after doctors at multiple hospitals in Bhola and Barishal failed to stop the bleeding.

Doctors said she needed 22 stitches for wounds to her private parts and there were numerous cuts in her toes and back.

The girl's family

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8 killed in LoC clashes

Claims Pakistan, says 5 of them Indian soldiers; New Delhi denies

AGENCIES

Eight people died in firing along the de facto border in disputed Kashmir yesterday, the Pakistani military and local officials said, as tensions between nuclear-armed rivals Islamabad and New Delhi soar over the Himalayan region.

Skirmishes are frequent across the so-called Line of Control (LoC), but the latest deaths in two separate incidents come after Pakistan warned it was ready to meet any Indian aggression over Kashmir.

"In efforts to divert attention from precarious situation in IOJ&K (Indian-held Kashmir), Indian Army increases firing along LOC. 3 Pakistani soldiers embraced shahadat. Pakistan Army responded effectively," the Pakistani military said in a statement.

"5 Indian soldiers killed, many injured, bunkers damaged. Intermittent exchange of fire continues," it added, without specifying further where the incident took place.

An Indian army spokesman denied that.

"No casualties. This assertion is wrong," the spokesman told Reuters.

In a statement, the Indian army said that from around 0700 local time Pakistan violated a ceasefire between the two nations.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

No let-up in dengue woes

Number of infected people rising again after slight drop on Eid Day

HELEMU ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

The number of dengue patients in the capital has begun to show an upward trend in the past two days, following a fall during the Eid vacation.

According to the Director General of Health Services, 1,929 patients were infected in the last 24 hours across the country till 8:00am yesterday. Of them, 811 were in the capital and 1,118 outside Dhaka.

The number was 1,200 on August 13.

Director of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital Uttam Kumar Barua said the number of admitted dengue patients has been on the rise immediately after the vacation period.

Around 383 dengue patients were undergoing treatment at the hospital on August 12, while it was 281 and 448 in August 13 and 14 respectively. Till yesterday, 432 patients were undergoing treatment there.

Barua said the number of people taking dengue tests had not reduced even during Eid.

Some 6,207 people took dengue tests since August 1 to 14, whereas it was 2,873 in July and 997 in June.

A similar situation was found in other hospitals.

"We thought there would be fewer patients yesterday as it was a government holiday, but many people came," said Assistant Director (administration) Nasir Uddin of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

There were 710 dengue patients on August 12, while it was 601 and 640 respectively in August 13 and 14. Till yesterday, 601 patients were undergoing treatment in the hospital.

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Three-year-old Alifa rests in her mother's arms while her seven-month-old brother Arfan lies next to them in the capital's Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital yesterday. The siblings have been suffering from dengue since Monday. Inset, third-grader Rabbi, another dengue patient, cries in pain in the same hospital.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

DENGUE OUTBREAK



NEW CASES IN
LAST 24 HRS
1,929

TOTAL DENGUE
CASES
48,280

OUTSIDE DHAKA
17,644

DEATH
93
(40 OFFICIAL)

UNDERGOING
TREATMENT
7,570

SOURCE: DGHS