

BGB to observe Martyrs' Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) will observe Martyrs' Day today with due solemnity to commemorate those killed in the February 25-26 carnage at Pikhana headquarters of then Bangladesh Rifles (now BGB) in 2009.

A total of 74 people, including 57 army officers, were killed in the carnage.

Marking the day, BGB will organise Quran-khwani, as well as doa and milad mahfil in mosques at the headquarters, and all other units and border outposts, said a BGB press release yesterday.

Representatives of the president and prime minister, the home minister, chiefs of three armed forces, and BGB director general, among others, will place wreaths at the memorial of the martyrs at Banani military graveyard around 9am, the release added.

All BGB members will wear black badges, and BGB flag will be hoisted at half-mast at BGB installations.

A special prayer and doa mahfil will be held tomorrow after Jumma prayers at BGB Central Mosque, Dhaka Sector Mosque and Border Guard Hospital Mosque in Pikhana.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan will attend the programme at BGB Central Mosque.

Besides, senior secretary of the home ministry's public security division, BGB director general, invited guests, close relatives of the martyred, and all officers and force members working in Pikhana will participate in the programmes, maintaining social distance, the press release added.



Sheikh Rehana, the younger daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and sister of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, received the first dose of her Covid-19 vaccine in the capital yesterday. The number of people vaccinated for Covid-19 rose to 26,73,038 as the vaccination campaign entered 15th day yesterday. A total of 1,81,985 people were vaccinated in around 1010 vaccination centers across the country on the day, according to a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

PHOTO COURTESY: PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

No construction on canals without DSCC permission: Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday gave instruction to suspend all housing projects constructed by filling up canals without the city corporation's permission.

The mayor uttered the instruction while visiting Fakirkhali under ward-75 around 11am yesterday.

He said parts of Jirani and Rampura canals are being filled up and different housing projects are being constructed, illegally filling the canals. "We have visited the areas and directed officials concerned to take necessary steps to stop the activities," said the mayor.

Taposh visited the bank of Balu river, Dasher Kandi, Kayetpara Bazar, Iderkandi and Fakirkhali areas as part of his weekly visits. Taposh said they visited the areas and found some housing projects occupying lands without the permission of DSCC. He said the construction is being done in an unplanned manner.

The mayor said people are suffering in these areas and they are not getting any result even protesting against the encroachment.

Mayor Taposh said they have already directed their estate department and zonal officials concerned to stop dredging of the areas.

"They will not be allowed to construct housing projects here and there without permission and if necessary, DSCC will seize vehicles and equipment from the companies," he said.

Taposh said they want to keep a playground in every ward of Dhaka city for children.

"We have visited TT para adjoining Motijheel under ward-8, and are considering building a playground there," he said.

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CORRUPTION CASE AGAINST HAJI SALIM

HC to deliver verdict on appeal on Mar 9

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court will deliver its verdict on March 9 on the appeal filed by independent lawmaker and Awami League leader Haji Mohammad Salim, challenging the trial court verdict that sentenced him to 13 years' imprisonment in a corruption case.

The HC bench of Justice Md Moinul Islam Chowdhury and Justice AKM Zahurul Huq yesterday fixed the date, after concluding rehearing on the appeal.

During hearing, Haji Salim's lawyers Abdul Baset Majumder and Sayed Ahmed Raza told the HC that their client was not involved in any corruption, but the corruption case was filed against him in 2007 for political motives and to harass him.

The allegations brought against Salim could not be properly controverted during the trial proceedings of the case at the lower court, as there was no lawyer for him, they argued.

The lawyers prayed to the HC to allow his appeal and acquit him of the charges.

Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan said the trial court had rightly convicted and sentenced Salim to imprisonment, after properly evaluating the evidence and documents and therefore, his appeal might be dismissed.

ACC filed the corruption case against Salim with Lalbagh Police Station on 24 October, 2007, on charge of amassing illegal assets.

The Special Judge's Court-7 of Dhaka convicted Salim and sentenced him to 13 years' imprisonment on April 27, 2008.

Salim filed an appeal with the HC on October 25, 2009 against the trial court verdict. Following the appeal, the HC on January 2, 2011 acquitted Salim of the corruption case.

Then, ACC appealed against the HC verdict to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

The Appellate Division on January 12, 2015 scrapped the HC verdict and directed the HC to hold a rehearing of Salim's appeal and to dispose of the appeal again.

ATTACKED BY TRANSPORT WORKERS

Barishal University students withdraw demonstrations

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Barishal University (BU) students yesterday withdrew their ongoing demonstrations, after a meeting with the university's vice chancellor, students, transport workers and leaders, and law enforcers yesterday afternoon.

Following the meeting, Fazlul Haque Rajib, a student, read out a statement at a press conference on the campus.

He said they took the decision to withdraw the movement including road blockade after being assured of getting adequate security from the law enforcement agencies. Besides, the transport leaders pledged that such clashes will not occur in the future.

Another student, Amit Hasan Raktim, said, "Police told us that all the identified culprits will be brought to book."

Expressing regret over the incident, Mominuddin Kalu, president of Bus Owners' Association, said the attack on the students was unfortunate.

University VC Sadequul Arefin said the discussion among all parties was very fruitful.

On February 16, two BU students and transport workers alternated at BRTC bus counter at the city's Rupatoli. At one stage, the workers stabbed a student.

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ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Children should learn moral values in their mother tongue

Says NHRC chief Nasima Begum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pointing to the importance of ethnic community children learning moral values in their mother language, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Nasima Begum yesterday said this could be achieved effectively through the international mother language institute.

There are books in mother language for ethnic community children while a separate institution has been established to promote mother tongue, said the NHRC chief, addressing a national-level dialogue.

Indigenous Peoples Development Services (IPDS) with support from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organised the national-level dialogue on "Indigenous Policy" at the YWCA auditorium in the capital.

Attending the programme online, the NHRC chief said the commission is going to take a new initiative with aim to uphold human values among everyone. She said

they will incorporate ethnic community members in the initiative so that children can learn that people next to them have the equal right.

The NHRC chief also said establishing two separate departments for ethnic community members of hill and the plainlands is essential to address their problems effectively.

She stressed that for doing so, at first the name of the existing Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry has to be changed.

Nasima Begum said a policy regarding ethnic community people should be formulated ahead of the golden jubilee celebration of the country's independence.

Addressing the event online as special guest, Workers' Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon said separate policy for ethnic community people could be formulated after incorporating issues -- which are already in different government instruments -- in a single framework.

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AGRANI BANK OFFICER KILLING

Prime suspect Noman surrenders before court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The prime suspect in the case filed over the death of Agrani Bank officer Moudud Ahmed after being assaulted surrendered before a court in Sylhet yesterday.

With the help of transport worker leaders, the suspect, Noman Hasnur of Sylhet sadar upazila's Tukerbazar area, surrendered before Sylhet Metropolitan Magistrate Court at around 11am, said SM Abu Farhad, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

The court's magistrate Md Saifur Rahman then sent him to Sylhet Central Jail, the OC said, adding that the police filed a seven-day remand prayer for him.

"The court did not proceed hearing on the remand petition, but taking Noman to remand is important to know what happened that day and to identify his associates," he said.

On Saturday afternoon, Agrani Bank Haripur Gas Field branch's officer Moudud Ahmed hired a CNG-run auto-rickshaw from Haripur area of Sylhet's Jaintiapur upazila to go to Bandarabazar in the city.

Upon reaching there around 7:45pm, he locked into an altercation with the driver over fare. He was then beaten badly by the driver and his transport worker associates.

Moudud (35) died at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital that night, an hour after he was taken there by locals.

Moudud, hailing from Mymensingh's Gouripur upazila, used to work as an officer (cash) at the bank and lived in the area.

After police detected the prime suspect, Moudud's brother Abdul Wadud filed a case with Kotwali Police Station on Sunday, accusing Noman and several other unnamed associates.

Bangladesh, India Air Force chiefs meet in Dhaka

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria yesterday called on Bangladesh Air Chief Marshal Masihuzzaman Serniabat and other senior officers to discuss matters of mutual cooperation.

He had arrived in Dhaka on February 22 for a three-day visit to strengthen the ties between the Armed Forces of the two countries.

The visit came ahead of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's planned visit to Bangladesh on March 26 and 27 to join Bangladesh's 50th year of independence celebrations and 50 years of diplomatic relations between India and Bangladesh.

Earlier on Tuesday, Bhadauria and the Indian delegation visited Bangladesh Air Force Base in Chattogram and experienced the pristine beauty of St Martin's Island. He also interacted with BAF officers at BAF Base Zahurul Haq, according to tweets by the Indian High Commission in Bangladesh.

He also paid tribute to the members of the Bangladesh Armed Forces, who made the supreme sacrifices during the 1971 Liberation War, by laying wreath at the altar of Shikha Anirban.



A well-wisher leaves a rose on the coffin of Syed Abul Maksud as a symbol of last respect at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital. The body of the eminent journalist, columnist, researcher and activist, was kept at the Shaheed Minar yesterday where people from all walks of life paid their tributes, following a namaz-e-janaza at the Jatiya Press Club.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Even after multiple warnings by traffic police, motorbikers keep parking their vehicles on both sides of the road going from Kakrail to Fakirapool in the capital, leading to regular traffic congestion. In a last ditch effort, law enforcers tipped some motorbikes over yesterday, according to locals.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Man beaten to death 'by siblings'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was beaten to death allegedly by his two siblings in Dhaka's Badda area yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Syed Abul Ala (50), third among eight brothers and sisters.

Police arrested his two brothers -- Syed Ali Mitu (38) and Syed Musa (40) -- in connection with the killing, said Abu Saied Mia, inspector (investigation) of Badda Police Station.

Quoting the arrestees, the inspector said Ala was a drug addict and tortured his father for money. In protest, the two arrestees beat him up, leaving him dead on the spot, he said.

On information, police recovered the body around 2pm and sent it to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Bangladesh, Japan held strong through pandemic

Says Ambassador Ito Naoki

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

As the pandemic ravaged economies and health systems across the world last year, the two peace-loving nations of Bangladesh and Japan held strong by working together for national and regional prosperity and stability, Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Ito Naoki said yesterday.

The ambassador made the remarks at the Japan embassy in the capital at a national day reception programme to celebrate the birthday of Emperor Naruhito.

During his speech, Ambassador Naoki relayed the emperor's message for Bangladesh. "Let us share the pain. Let us cooperate. I look forward to a bright future ahead for both of us as we overcome the pandemic with patience," the Japanese emperor said, according to Naoki.

So far, Japan has provided budgetary support approximately worth USD 330 million to Bangladesh in August last year. The Asian powerhouse has also signed the largest ever annual yen-loan package of approximately USD 3.2 billion for quality

infrastructure projects.

Beginning from 2020 till 2025, Bangladesh will see the completion of various JICA-supported mega projects.

Dhaka MRT Line 6 will be partially open in December. After that, the Special Economic Zone in Arahazar, Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport Extension, Matarbari Deep Sea Port and Power Stations, and Bangabandhu Railway Bridge will start operating one after another, Naoki said.

"These are essential for Bangladesh's growth," Ambassador Naoki said, adding that these projects are capable of changing the face of the nation once completed.

"Japan will continue to extend its support to Bangladesh's development as much as possible, bearing in mind it also leads to the overall stability and prosperity of the Bay of Bengal and Indo-Pacific region, which are conducive to realise our common vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific," he said.

Addressing the event as chief guest,

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