

12th anniversary of Pikhana carnage observed

STAR REPORT

The nation yesterday observed the 12th anniversary of Pikhana carnage, which left 74 people, including 57 army officers, dead.

At 9am, President's Military Secretary Major General SM Salah Uddin Islam placed a floral wreath on behalf of Abdul Hamid at Banani Military Graveyard. Then Prime Minister's Military Secretary Major General Nakib Ahmed paid tribute to the martyrs on behalf of Sheikh Hasina.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, chiefs of the three branches of armed forces -- army chief General Aziz Ahmed, acting navy chief Rear Admiral M Abu Ashraf and air force chief Air Chief Marshal Masihuzzaman Seraniat -- and Border Guard Bangladesh (BCB) Director General Major General Md Shafeenul Islam also placed wreaths at the graveyard.

They later observed a minute of silence and prayed for the eternal peace and salvation of the departed souls.

Families of the deceased placed floral wreaths on their graves as well, according to an ISPR press release.

According to UNB, BGB had organised Quran-khwani as well as doa and milad mahfil.

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Members of the armed forces pay tribute to the army officials who lost their lives in the Pikhana carnage. The nation yesterday observed the 12th anniversary of the carnage, where 74 people, including 57 army officers, were killed, after then Bangladesh Rifles staged a revolt. The photo was taken from the capital's Banani Military Graveyard.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Railway to begin recruitment soon

Says minister, adding 100+ stations remain closed due to manpower shortage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manpower shortage forced Bangladesh Railway (BR) to shut down more than 100 stations, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan yesterday said, adding that they would recruit 10,000 to 12,000-strong manpower in the first phase.

"We hope to publish advertisement [for recruitment] within this month," Sujan said, adding, "We will be able to get rid of manpower shortage within two or three years."

Speaking at a programme at capital's Rail Bhaban, he said more than 100 stations of Bangladesh Railway remain shut down currently due to manpower crisis in the state-run transport agency.

He said they were working hard to give service to people but there is a huge shortage of railway infrastructure including rail tracks, which is holding them back.

Whenever they introduce new train, it causes more delay to rail operations and pose more security risks as most of the railway network is single-line, he said.

Schedule-related problem may not go until the construction of double-lines across the country, he added.

BR SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH WATERAID

BR yesterday signed an agreement with Water Aid to establish or renovate public toilets and carry on "horizontal learning programme" to improve water, sanitation and hygiene at railway stations.

BR's Director General Dharendra Nath Mazumder and Hasin Jahan, BR's Director General Dharendra Nath Mazumder and Hasin Jahan, BR's country director of WaterAid Bangladesh, signed the agreement on behalf

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Retired cop, accused in graft case, 'threatens' ACC official in Barishal

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

An official of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Barishal has allegedly been cornered and threatened by a retired police official when the ACC deputy assistant director went to the court premises on Wednesday to testify against the former constable accused in a corruption case.

Later, the deputy director of ACC Barishal integrated district office rescued him.

The incident took place on Barishal Divisional Special Court premises in the afternoon. The ACC official, Md Al-Amin, filed a general diary with Barisal Kotwali Model Police Station that night.

According to ACC, they have informed the higher authorities regarding the incident for taking legal action against the accused.

Al-Amin, deputy assistant director of

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ACC's Barishal unit, said he filed the case against retired constable Md Alauddin Dhali and his wife Maksuda Begum on October 10, 2018 with Barishal Model Police Station over not submitting proper wealth documents and concealing information.

Also, Dhali could not provide information of around Tk 57 lakh in his and his wife's name to the ACC, Al-Amin added.

The charge sheet was submitted to the court on October 11 last year.

"I went to the court in the afternoon to testify against the accused. Dhali threatened and detained me on the court premises around 1pm on the day," he said. "Afraid, I took shelter at the police booth. The ACC deputy director rescued me an hour later," he added.

According to ACC sources, the accused

Dispose of Pikhana carnage case by this year, demands BNP

UNB, Dhaka

Expressing displeasure over the delay in punishing perpetrators, BNP yesterday demanded announcement of BDR mutiny murder case's final verdict by this year.

"Twelve years have elapsed, but it has not been possible to finally dispose of the [Pikhana] murder case. We're disappointed, and people are shocked over the delay in the trial. This case is moving at a very slow pace," said BNP Vice Chairperson Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed.

"We don't see any sign that the process of leave-to-appeal will begin this year. We urge the judiciary to ensure speedy trial of the murder case. We hope the final verdict will be delivered within this year," he said.

The BNP leader also expected that the convicted will be executed soon after the verdict is pronounced.

Hafiz came up with the remarks while talking to reporters, after placing wreaths at a monument set up at Banani graveyard, in memory of the army officials killed in the Pikhana carnage, on its 12th anniversary.

A total of 74, including 57 army officials, were killed during the mutiny that took place at Pikhana headquarters on February 25-26, 2009.

On November 5, 2013, a Dhaka court gave death sentence to 152 people, and life imprisonment to 160 in the case. On November 27, 2017, the High Court confirmed death penalty for 139 out of the 152 accused.

Hafiz, a retired army officer, demanded that the report of the Court of Inquiry, headed by then quartermaster General Lieutenant General Jahangir, be made public.

He said the perpetrators of the heinous massacre should be punished through a fair investigation and trial, as this incident could have a serious impact.

The BNP leader alleged that Pikhana carnage was carried out to weaken Bangladesh's military. People also want to know clearly who exactly the beneficiaries of the tragic incident are.

He alleged that an Awami League leader, who had been sentenced to life imprisonment by a lower court, was later

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Freedom fighter Wahid Ullah passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Freedom fighter Wahid Ullah passed away at his residence in the capital's Siddheshwari early yesterday.

He was 72.

Wahid breathed his last around 12am due to complications arising from advanced stage Parkinson's disease.

Born in 1948 in Feni, he fought valiantly against the Pakistani occupational forces during the country's Liberation War in Sector-1 under Sector Commander Captain Rafiqul Islam.

He left behind his wife Sureaya Akhter, sons Karim Al Waheed and Mahmood Al Waheed, and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

His elder son Karim is the digital editor of The Daily Star.

Wahid was given guard of honour by Bangladesh Police following his namaz-e-janaza at Ramna Thana Jaame Masjid after Zohr prayers.

Later, he was buried at Banani graveyard in Dhaka.

Country's food production plan not nutrition-sensitive

Experts say at discussion on nutritional challenges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the pressing issue of malnutrition casts a shadow over the country's public health situation, experts suggest the government take necessary measures to ensure nutrition in food.

This, they said, is especially important following the adverse impact of Covid-19 on the country's economy, which might lead to a rise in the number of stunting and wasting cases in children.

They also underscored the need for co-operation to ensure proper data collection on malnutrition, as Bangladesh lacks sufficient data on the issue.

The prognoses came as part of a discussion titled 'From Evidence to Action: Future Challenges for Better Nutrition in Bangladesh' held yesterday at a hotel in the capital. The programme was organised by Helen Keller International (HKI) Bangladesh.

During his speech, Dr Tahmeed Ahmed, Executive Director of ICDDR,B, said Bangladesh is doing well in solving stunting and wasting problems in children under the age of five.

He, however, expressed fear that the situation might deteriorate following the disruptive impact of Covid-19.

Senior Policy Advisor of NIPN M Asaduzzaman presented the keynote paper. He said, though malnutrition is a major problem for Bangladesh, no government organisation is charged with looking after the issue as a whole.

"Some organisations only partially look over malnutrition-related issues. Even the health ministry cannot be held responsible on the matter," he said.

He added that government policies, specifically in food production, are not nutrition-sensitive and in some cases lack proper directives on nutrition.

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MINI BYTES



Amazon is facing off Reliance in India, here's why

ZARIF FAIAZ

Amazon, world's largest e-commerce business is facing off Reliance, India's largest company in a legal battle that could shape the growth of the Indian e-commerce scenario. Amazon is pitting itself against the local giant with home ground advantage, which analysts think will pose a major challenge unlike anything Amazon has faced before.

WHAT THE FEUD IS ABOUT

The apple of discord is an Indian retailer - Future Group. Since 2019, Amazon has owned a 49% stake in Future Coupons, with an indirect ownership stake in Future Retail.

Earlier this year, Future Group made a deal with Reliance Group to sell \$3.4bn worth of its retail assets. Amazon argued that, its indirect ownership of Future Retail prevented Future Group from selling its assets to a selected group of Indian companies, including Reliance - setting off a one-of-a-kind of feud between two of the largest companies in the world in the Indian market over a brick and mortar business.

Last Monday, the Supreme Court of India ruled in favour of Amazon - halting the Future-Reliance deal until further notice - against the Delhi High Court's earlier decision to allow the Reliance purchase to go ahead.

WHY IT MATTERS

For the past few years, Amazon has been aggressively expanding in India, to utilise the growing Indian e-commerce market, where Reliance is one of its primary competitors.

If Reliance's purchase of Future Retail's assets goes through, Reliance will gain access to over 1500 stores in more than 400 cities in India, along with Future's wholesale and logistics -- a major disadvantage for Amazon in India.

If the court ultimately decides to rule in favour of Amazon, it will slow down Reliance's push in the e-commerce where Amazon is currently set to dominate.

WHAT IT INDICATES

The feud between two of the richest men in the world are an indication of the growth potential of the Indian e-commerce market. It also shows how difficult it can get for foreign players to operate in the Indian market.

Analysts claim that Reliance, the local hero, has a home ground advantage under the leadership of Mukesh Ambani who is known as being disruptive. Although the latest round of court ruling suggests a tough battle ahead.

It is highly unlikely that Amazon will give up without a fight since the e-commerce giant will not want to lose years of difficult expansion -- under tight government rules that favour local e-commerce companies over foreign ones -- to Reliance's local advantage.

ROAD ACCIDENTS JU student among 3 killed

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed and 11 injured in road accidents in three districts during the last two days, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Natore, a Jahangirnagar University student died as his motorbike hit a roadside tree in Bagatipara upazila on Wednesday night.

Abdullah Al Mahmud Shafi was a student of the public administration at JU, said department Chairman Prof Md Nurul Amin.

Shafi lost control over the bike, said the professor.

He was rushed to Bagatipara Upazila Health Complex and later shifted to a Natore hospital, he added. He was then transferred to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where he was declared dead, he quoted family as saying.

In Manikganj, truck driver Rakib Hossain from Faridpur was killed and 10 were injured in a bus-truck collision on Dhaka-Aricha highway at Pachuria in Ghior upazila yesterday, said highway police.

The injured were taken to Manikganj Sadar Hospital.

In Munshiganj, a truck driver's helper was killed and the trucker injured as the vehicle collided head-on with an unknown vehicle on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Gazaria.

The deceased was Abdur Salam (25). Driver Md Lablu (50) was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said police.

গণ-বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সাম্প্রতিককালে ফেইসবুক (Facebook), একটি স্বল্প পরিচিত পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত সংবাদ এবং একটি টিভি টকশোতে বিকাশ লিমিটেড (বিকাশ) বিষয়ক বেশ কিছু ভুল তথ্য ও ব্যাখ্যা প্রদান করা হয়েছে। একটি স্বচ্ছ আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠান হিসেবে বিকাশ দেশের প্রচলিত সকল আইনকানুন মেনে আর্থিক সেবা দিয়ে যাচ্ছে। বিভ্রান্তিমূলক তথ্যের প্রেক্ষিতে সঠিক তথ্যগুলো জনসমক্ষে তুলে ধরা প্রয়োজন।

১. ইতোপূর্বে ২০২০ সালের ২৯ অক্টোবর ফেইসবুকে একটি ফেইক একাউন্টের মাধ্যমে বিকাশ-এর বিরুদ্ধে উদ্দেশ্যমূলকভাবে অপপ্রচার চালানোর জন্য জোবাইদা রহমান নামক একজনকে বিকাশ-এর অংশীদার মানি ইন মোশন এলএলসিএর শেয়ারহোল্ডার হিসেবে উপস্থাপন করা হয়। উক্ত মিথ্যা তথ্য ও অপপ্রচারের বিরুদ্ধে বিকাশ আইনী পদক্ষেপ হিসেবে মামলা দায়ের করে। কাফরুল থানা মামলা নং- ১৯(১৯)২০।
২. একই হীন উদ্দেশ্যে একটি স্বল্প পরিচিত পত্রিকায় বিকাশ সম্পর্কিত "প্রধানমন্ত্রী ও রাষ্ট্রের বিরুদ্ধে বিজ্ঞাপন প্রচার করছে বিকাশ" শিরোনামে একটি মিথ্যা, উদ্দেশ্যপ্রসোদিত এবং ভিত্তিহীন সংবাদ প্রকাশ করা হয়। উক্ত অপপ্রচারের বিরুদ্ধে আইনী পদক্ষেপ হিসেবে সাইবার ট্রাইব্যুনালে ডিজিটাল সিকিউরিটি অ্যাক্ট ২০১৮ অনুযায়ী মামলা করে বিকাশ। পিটিশন মামলা নম্বর- ৫৪৮/২০২০।
৩. সম্প্রতি ফেইসবুকে বিকাশ-এর সুনাম ক্ষুণ্ণ করার অভিসন্ধিতে একটি বিভ্রমমূলক ডিডিও ক্লিপ সম্প্রচার করা হয়েছে। উক্ত ডিডিও ক্লিপ প্রদত্ত তথ্যবলী সম্পূর্ণ বানোয়াট, মিথ্যা এবং ভিত্তিহীন। এ বিষয়ে বিকাশ লিমিটেড বিটিআরসি'কে অবগত করে উক্ত ডিডিও ক্লিপের সম্প্রচার বন্ধের জন্য অনুরোধ জানিয়েছে। এ বিষয়ে কাফরুল থানায় একটি সাধারণ ডায়েরি করা হয়েছে (ডায়েরি নং- ৪৯৯, তারিখ- ০৯/০২/২০২১)। একই আঙ্গিকে একটি টিভি টকশোতে ডেভিড বার্গম্যানকে বিকাশ-এর অংশীদার প্রতিষ্ঠান 'মানি ইন মোশন'-এর পরিচালক হিসেবে উল্লেখ করা হয়। উল্লেখ্য, ডিডিও ক্লিপে উত্থাপিত সকল তথ্য উপাত্ত জালকৃত ও উদ্দেশ্যমূলকভাবে পরিবর্তিত ও বিকৃত করা হয়েছে যার প্রমাণ ইতোমধ্যেই বিকাশ-এর আইন বিভাগের হস্তগত হয়েছে।
৪. বিকাশ দৃঢ়তার সঙ্গে উল্লেখ করতে চায় যে ডেভিড বার্গম্যান নামের কোনো ব্যক্তি কখনোই বিকাশ-এর সহযোগি প্রতিষ্ঠান 'মানি ইন মোশন এলএলসি'র সঙ্গে সম্পৃক্ত ছিল না এবং বর্তমানেও নেই।

বিকাশ বিগত দশ বছর ধরে কেন্দ্রীয় ব্যাংকের সকল নীতিমালা মেনে নিরবচ্ছিন্নভাবে মোবাইল আর্থিক সেবা প্রদান করে চলেছে। বর্তমান সরকারের 'ডিজিটাল বাংলাদেশ' রূপকল্প বাস্তবায়নের অংশ হিসেবে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের সরাসরি পৃষ্ঠপোষকতায় এক দশক ধরে গড়ে ওঠা এই এমএফএস খাতকে ধ্বংসের জন্য একটি সংঘবদ্ধ চক্র বেশ কিছুদিন যাবৎ নানা রকম মিথ্যা অপপ্রচার চালিয়ে যাচ্ছে। আর্থিক অন্তর্ভুক্তিতে অবদান রাখা প্রতিষ্ঠান বিকাশকে নিয়ে এমন অসত্য ও উদ্দেশ্যমূলক অপপ্রচারের বিরুদ্ধে তীব্র নিন্দা জানাই এবং বিকাশ-এর সকল গ্রাহক ও শুভাকাঙ্ক্ষীদেরকে এ বিষয়ে সজাগ ও সতর্ক থাকার অনুরোধ জানাচ্ছি।

বিকাশ কর্তৃপক্ষ