

DHAKA-DELHI RELATIONS Doraiswami for best possible understanding

UNB, Dhaka

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Vikram Kumar Doraiswami yesterday emphasised ensuring the best possible understanding between the two countries.

While inaugurating the renovated Media Centre at Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka, the high commissioner termed the Bangladesh media "vibrant, free, colourful and very vocal".

Jatiya Press Club president Farida Yasmin, general secretary Elias Khan, joint secretary Mainul Alam, and treasurer Shahed Chowdhury were, among others, present at the event.

Doraiswami said India values and respects the independence and story of Bangladesh's struggle.

Farida Yasmin said the relationship between the two countries is expanding on all fronts and laid emphasis on more cooperation between respective media.

She also recalled the Indian High Commissioner's contribution in upgrading the Media Centre.



Spring is the season of rebirth and vitality. After the cold months of winter, spring comes in new leaves, warmth, and sunshine, and of course, the bright red of newly blossomed Shimul flowers. This photo was taken yesterday from Barishal's Gaurnadi upazila.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Celebrations of Golden Jubilee of independence begins across country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the nation is set to celebrate the golden jubilee of the country's independence this year, different organisations started holding programmes marking the auspicious occasion, as March -- the month of independence -- commenced yesterday.

Pro-Liberation War platforms Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee and Sammilita Samajik Andolon held separate programmes yesterday, marking the occasion.

Besides, publishing house Sanghati Prokashan said it will publish 50 books of prominent authors under the series "Liberation War of '71 and Bangladesh", marking the 50th anniversary of the country's independence.

To celebrate the occasion, the government will hold drone, aerial and fireworks shows on March 26, according to a BSS report.

Addressing a webinar organised by Nirmul Committee yesterday, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque said it is essential to make studying of the Liberation War's history mandatory at all levels of education, said a press release.

Besides, the atrocities committed by anti-Liberation War elements should also be incorporated in the curriculums, he said.

The minister said at present, the national anthem is not sung and the national flag is not hoisted in many of the country's educational institutions.

Rendition of the national anthem at educational institutions up to the

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I'm a victim of conspiracy

Says DU teacher Samia Rahman on her demotion for plagiarism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) teacher Samia Rahman, who has been demoted to assistant professor over plagiarism, yesterday claimed that she is innocent and a victim of "colleagues' conspiracy".

"I didn't write and submit the research paper for which I was punished," she said while talking to media at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

She sought intervention of President Abdul Hamid, DU's chancellor, in this regard and said she would go to court for legal recourse.

"I did not get justice," she said.

Syed Mahfuzul Haque Marjan, who was co-author of the research paper and has also been punished, confessed to the investigation committee that it was only him who was responsible for the paper, Samia said.

"I made a request to then dean of social sciences faculty, Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed, to withdraw the article on February 5, 2017, stating that it was not mine. The dean was supposed to raise it in the syndicate meeting, but he delayed the matter for seven months. After the tenure of former

[DU] Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique ended in 2017, he raised the matter with the syndicate, which was intentional," Samia claimed.

"The investigation committee and syndicate's decisions were one-sided, mala fide and biased," she added.

She claimed that the letter -- said to come from the University of Chicago Press Journal -- which was the main clue in the investigation done by Dhaka University, was "fake".

"Alex Martin, the complainant, was not involved with the University of Chicago Press Journal," she claimed.

As proof, she showed screenshot of some messenger chat with Craig Walker, editor of the journal.

However, The Daily Star couldn't verify the claim.

When asked, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology VC Prof Farid Uddin, former dean of the DU faculty, said, "It all happened a few years back. I don't remember clearly."

"Besides, the investigation committee did not call me. The university authority proceeded on its own. There had been an

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'BNP promises to implement dream of democratic state'

Says Mirza Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul yesterday vowed to implement the dream of establishing a democratic state on the occasion of 50 years of the country's independence.

He said this is a dream from the country's Liberation War. "Let's come together to take a vow to implement the dream of 1971. That promise will lead us to build a democratic and prosperous Bangladesh," said Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

He made the remarks while inaugurating the party's programme to celebrate the golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence.

Fakhrul said that the independence of the country is the outcome of peoples' dreams. "The dream of the independence was to build a democratic state," he said.

The BNP leader alleged when the country was celebrating the golden jubilee of independence, there was a conspiracy going on to snatch Ziaur Rahman's Bir Uttam title.

Saying that a distorted history of the country has been spread, Fakhrul said, "We want to eradicate economic disparity. We want to move forward with all."

Fakhrul inaugurated the programme at a city hotel where party leaders were present. Representatives from United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Switzerland, Australia, Norway, Nedarlands, Turkey, Japan, United Nations, USAID and some other organisations were present there.



A mother accompanies her excited little one to check out red balloons being sold on the walkway beside river Kirtankhola last Friday. From afternoon to evening every day, this area at 30 Godown beside the river's embankment becomes a hub for people seeking refreshment and recreation in an open space.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Public recreation spots thrive in Barishal city

Kirtankhola embankment and Bangabandhu Udyan bring much-needed refreshment to citizens

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

The recreational spots of Barishal are returning to life as people get out for some fresh air on the banks of river Kirtankhola and Bangabandhu Udyan.

People of all ages are visiting the spots with their friends and family as fear of the virus has lessened with the arrival of the vaccine.

Educational institutions have been closed for a while and there is no other way for young people to keep themselves entertained from time to time, said people operating food stalls inside the recreational spots.

Visiting Bangabandhu Udyan after 5pm, this correspondent found hundreds of people enjoying the greenery of the park. Rafiq, a singara seller in the park, said he sells the fried snack every day from 4-10pm. A fellow tea seller of his said at least a thousand cups of tea are sold in the park every day.

Mridula Talukder, who brought her son to the park, said the big green field of the park is a treat to the child and the lake next to it adds to the beauty of the place.

Meanwhile, the three-kilometre long embankment on the west back of river Kirtankhola is now a major recreational centre of Barishal city.

Rahim Mia, a coconut seller on the

spot, said over a thousand people visit the area every day.

There is a monument on the genocide committed by Pakistan army during the Liberation War of Bangladesh that is supervised by the district administration.

Maruf Ahmed Bappi travelled with his two daughters to Barishal. "The kids have had to stay indoors the whole time during the pandemic. This change of scenery has really made them happy."

Barisal City Corporation Administrative Officer Moazzem Hossain said that thousands of people visit the banks of Kirtankhola every day. BCC has built this embankment and set up lighting and other facilities that are required at a recreational centre.

On the importance of such recreational spots, Dasgupta Ashish Kumar, advisor to the Barisal Regional Teachers' Association, said this refreshment is imperative for the physical and mental development and well-being of children, especially since they have been staying cooped up in the house for so long.

Mental health specialist Tapan Kumar Saha, who is a retired professor of Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH), echoed Ashish Kumar's statement, saying travelling is effective in maintaining good mental health for people of all ages.

Admission tests at RU begin June 14

OUR CORRESPONDENT, RU

The admission test of Rajshahi University (RU) for the academic session (2020-2021) will start from June 14.

The entry test under C unit will be held on June 14, A unit on June 15 and B unit on June 16.

The decision was taken at a meeting presided over by RU Vice Chancellor Prof M Abdus Sobhan, according to a press release issued yesterday.

The tests will be held under three shifts each day -- 9:30am to 10:30am; 12pm to 1pm and 3pm to 4pm.

Around 15,000 students can sit for the examination in each shift, the release added. A maximum of 45,000 applicants will be selected from each unit on the basis of their HSC results.

The primary process of the applications will begin from 12pm on March 7 and will continue till 11:59pm on March 18.

The admission tests will be held based only on multiple-choice questions, according to the release.

Further details can be found on the university website -- www.ru.ac.bd, the release added.

Japan, UNHCR sign \$10m deal

Project taken to improve water supply for Rohingyas, host communities in Teknaf

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Japan and the UN Refugee Agency have signed an agreement to provide approximately USD 10 million to improve water supply and distribution systems for Rohingya refugees and host communities in Teknaf.

The agreement was signed by UNHCR Bangladesh Assistant Representative Yumiko Kashiwa, and Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh ITO Naoki, at the UNHCR country office in Dhaka on Sunday.

The project will be implemented in the next three years in collaboration with the Economic Relations Division, Department of Public Health and Engineering, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and the deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar.

Teknaf has been facing challenges in ensuring safe access to water for local population for many years. The situation has become even more challenging following the influx of Rohingya refugees in recent years. This contribution will help stabilise the water supply, and to improve the living conditions of both communities, according to a statement of UNHCR.

"Bangladesh government and the people continue to generously host this vulnerable population. UNHCR, with the support of the Government of Japan, is committed to supporting host communities as well as the 'Rohingya' population," said Kashiwa, said a statement from Japan embassy.

The Japanese ambassador said, "I sincerely hope that this project will be able to support the water environment of host community and refugees in Teknaf, and to contribute to the stable development of Bangladesh."

Woman, her grandchild die as truck hits auto-rickshaw

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman and her grandchild were killed and two other family members were injured after a truck hit their auto-rickshaw in Dhaka's Rupnagar area yesterday morning.

The deceased are Salma Begum (55), and Rinta Akter (11). Both arrived in Dhaka from Rangpur's Kaliganj upazila three days ago to visit family members.

The accident happened around 6am when Salma, Rinta, her elder sister Alina Jahan Rima (13) were heading towards Ashulia on the auto-rickshaw driven by the children's uncle Sohail Rana Salek.

As the auto-rickshaw reached near Pump

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LALDIARCHAR EVICTION DRIVE

Residents start taking down their homes amid no alternative

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Cg

Md Karim was dismantling his home yesterday morning at Patenga's Laldiarchar area in the port city. He built the house 30 years ago with his savings, but in the face of Chattogram Port Authority's (CPA) eviction drive, Karim had no alternative but to pull it down.

"I am breaking my home apart. Nothing could be more painful than this," Karim, who lives at Block-C of Laldiarchar, told The Daily Star, sitting next to the debris of his home.

Karim said he relocated to Laldiarchar in 1974, as the government acquired their then homestead to expand Zahurul Haque Air Force base in Chattogram. Since then, he had been living at Laldiarchar with his family.

People living beside a two-kilometre stretch of the road that connects Chattogram airport to the port city, were seen knocking down their tin-roofed and makeshift homes, and packing their belongings to put them on vans and trucks.

CPA engaged six magistrates along with hundreds of law enforcers for the eviction drive. But just a few days before the drive, people started relocating on their own.

Nurul Islam, another resident of Block-C, told this newspaper that CPA disconnected power and gas lines ten days ago, putting the people in huge misery.

CPA Chairperson Rear Admiral M Shahjahan briefed reporters ahead of launching the eviction drive.

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Walls of the many homes at Laldiarchar are being broken down, as residents of the area have decided to leave their houses ahead of a scheduled eviction drive by Chattogram Port Authority. Observing the situation, authorities chose not to use force to evict them. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Want to ensure Biman flights leave on time

Says national carrier's new MD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Maintaining flight schedule is the biggest challenge for Biman Bangladesh Airlines, said newly-appointed Managing Director and CEO of the national flag carrier Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal yesterday.

About his plan to take Biman to a new height, Abu Saleh said he has taken time to craft short, mid, and long term strategies.

During a press conference at Biman's head office in the capital's Kurmitola, the Biman chief said he wants to ensure that Biman flights leave on time.

"I want to see Biman flights leaving on time without the MD checking in at the airport. If this can be ensured, Biman will have a bright future," said Kamal.

The national carrier is infamous for its delays, resulting in passengers' distress.

Pointing to Biman flights leaving four to five hours later, the MD said the national airliner will be benefited on a long-term basis if they can maintain schedule.

Regarding alleged corruption in Biman, the new chief said he will not hesitate to take action against any official if found involved in corruption.