

BANGLADESH UPDATE

3,737
New cases in 24hrs

5,88,132
Total cases

8,830
Deaths

5,31,951
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

2,770,866
Deaths

126,351,051
Total cases

A walk down memory lane

Digital exhibition showcases extraordinary lives, legacies of Bangabandhu, Mahatma Gandhi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is an exhibition that utilises modern technology to offer a magnificent opportunity to walk through history. It is an exhibition that allows visitors to get a glimpse of the lives and legacies of two iconic leaders -- Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Mahatma Gandhi -- who inspired and continues to inspire millions in their own country and all over the world. The "Bangabandhu-Bapu Digital Exhibition" showcases the extraordinary journeys of the extraordinary leaders and the bond of two neighbouring countries, their shared sacrifices and the fight for justice that unite the two nations.

This digital exhibition at the International Convention Centre in Dhaka, was opened by visiting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday. In December last year, Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the Bangabandhu-Bapu Digital Exhibition at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi.

The exhibition is curated with 21 walls of information including the introduction wall highlighting the theme of the exhibition, a meeting wall based on the day the two leaders met in August 1947 and Ba-Bangamata wall celebrating the two women who stood by them.

There are over 100 points of digital engagement such as a holographic time machine that layers historical photos with a timeline to create a unique interface for users to reference the times and lives of these leaders.

The walk-through history begins with the introduction wall that showcases the theme of the exhibition and establishes the stature of these two great leaders in the eyes of the world via testimonials.

"Two extraordinary men at different times in history changed the destiny of their people, one adopting Ahimsa, while the other embraced his language to carve an identity against the oppressors," was written on the wall.

The next two walls provide a comprehensive view of the lives of the two leaders. "The Meeting Wall" is based on the day they met, in August

1947. It displays probably the only photo that has Bangabandhu and Bapu in the same frame.

According to the curator of the exhibition, Birad Rajaram Jainik, the exhibition is a digital one because it speaks the language of technology, and sends a message to the young generation about the lives of two great leaders.

He told this paper that key points of interest of the exhibition are the meeting wall, a robotic signature of both leaders, and their favourite music.

Apart from displaying photographs and digital content on different historic events of the two countries, historic quotes of the two great leaders were also exhibited on the walls.

One famous quote of Bangabandhu read: "My greatest strength is the love for my people. My greatest weakness is that I love them too much".

There is also a historic quote of Mahatma Gandhi: "My life is my message".

Representations of iconic moments like Mahatma Gandhi's Salt March, the historic March 7, 1971 speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman are noteworthy installations.

The pain, suffering and injustice endured by the Indian and Bangladeshi people are presented in the Jallianwala Bagh and the genocide tunnel. The visitor has an option to review the wall of 1971 that sequences the events of that year.

The "genocide tunnel" depicts the experiences of the many Bangladeshis who were brutally tortured at the hands of the Pakistani army in the 1971 Liberation War.

A number of photographs on the barbaric torture of Bangladeshi women by the Pakistani army during the war in 1971 were also put on display there.

Photographs of Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Mujib and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during different historic events were also displayed digitally.

The Triangle of Engagement provides a 360-degree view of the historic locations, a robotic signature of Bangabandhu and Bapu, and the favourite music of the two leaders playing in the background.

strengthen our mutual will to further develop our relations.

"Your esteemed father, late Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has taken his place among the prominent statesmen of the 20th century with the struggles he went through, and the sacrifices he made for his nation throughout his life," he mentioned.

Macron sent a statement via the French Embassy in Dhaka, congratulating the Bangladeshi people.

"This important date in the history of a young and promising State was made possible thanks to the admirable courage of the Bengali people to defend their cultural heritage and freedom at the call of the Father of the Bangladeshi Nation.

"In 1971, André Malraux called on the world to support the freedom of the Bengalis. Half a century later, Bangladesh can be proud of its achievements, and France remains ready to best meet its needs in the areas of the environment, energy, telecommunications, the blue economy and sovereignty in matters of defence and security, in the spirit of an inclusive, open and secure Indo-Pacific space.

"The Bangladeshi government and people have shown their generosity by welcoming the Rohingya forced to flee, once again, Myanmar in 2017. Your country has asserted itself as a responsible power: it is the main provider of troops for the peacekeeping operations in the world; it defends multilateralism and the norms of international law; it is committed to the defence of the environment and access to essential global public goods, such as health," he noted.

Earlier in the day, Prince Charles of Wales had also released a video message congratulating Bangladesh on the golden jubilee of its independence and commending the achievements in "bringing more than 50 million people out of extreme poverty since 1990; increasing life expectancy and reducing infant mortality; and turning the economy into one of the fastest-growing in the world."

The UK and Bangladesh "have a shared history, a shared constitutional commitment to freedom, the rule of law, free speech and democracy and an affection which continues to bind us in friendship."

The prince also commended Bangladesh's "considerable leadership on tackling the existential threats from accelerating climate change" and welcomed "the role of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in chairing the Climate Vulnerable Forum of nations most affected by the multiple threats of global warming, climate change, and biodiversity loss."

King of Sweden Carl XVI Gustaf also wrote to President Abdul Hamid, congratulating Bangladesh and wishing the best for the people of the country. Others who extended felicitations include US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh ITO Naoki.



President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stand in silence after placing wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar yesterday to pay homage to the martyrs of Liberation War.

PHOTO: PID

Let's work together for us, entire South Asia

FROM PAGE 1
independence and Mujib Borsho in person. Global leaders from various parts of the world sent congratulatory messages.

Yesterday's programme began with the national anthem, followed by recitations from holy books, screening of documentaries on the progress of Bangladesh, defence forces, life and struggle of Bangabandhu, and performances by eminent singers.

Kamal Abdul Naser, chief coordinator of the National Implementation Committee of the event, gave the welcome speech.

Recorded video messages of world leaders, including UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin, were also screened.

Modi then handed over the Gandhi Peace Prize-2020 to Sheikh Rehana. The Indian government gave the award to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (posthumously) in recognition of his outstanding contribution to social, economic, and political transformation through non-violent and other Gandhian methods.

Modi, who was the guest of honor at yesterday's programme, thanked Bangladesh government for inviting him.

He said this was significant also because India and Bangladesh are celebrating 50 years of diplomatic relations.

"For us Indians, it is a matter of pride, that we had the opportunity to honour respected Sheikh Mujibur with the Gandhi Peace Prize."

Modi remembered the hundreds of thousands of sons and daughters of Bangladesh who suffered countless atrocities, shed their blood, and put their lives at stake for their nation, their language, their culture.

He also remembered the brave soldiers of the Indian army who fought in the Liberation War.

"Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, General Aurora, General Jacob, Lance Naik Albert Ekka, Group Captain Chandan Singh, Captain Mohan Narayan Rao Samant, there are so many brave men such as these, whose stories of leadership and courage continue to inspire us even today."

He thanked Bangladesh for dedicating a war memorial to honour these brave martyrs in Ashuganj.

Modi said along with many of his friends, he too took part in the Liberation War when he was 20-22 years old. He did satyagraha (a form of passive resistance).

Due to his support for the war, he said he had been arrested and had a taste of life in prison.

"That is to say, there was as much of a longing for Bangladesh's freedom in India as there was in Bangladesh. The images of the heinous crimes and atrocities committed by the Pakistani army deeply disturbed us and gave us countless sleepless nights."

Quoting Gobind Haldar, he said,

"Those who gave Bangladesh its freedom by shedding oceans of blood, we will not forget them, we will not forget them."

The world did not talk as much about the cruelty, oppression, and atrocities of Operation Searchlight as it should have, Modi said.

In the midst of all this, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a ray of hope for the people here and for the Indians. Bangabandhu's courage, his leadership, ensured that no power could keep Bangladesh suppressed.

Under his leadership, common people, the farmers, the youth, the teachers, the workers, came together to form Mukti Bahini. Therefore, Mujib Borsho is also a day to remember his vision, his ideals, and his courage, Modi said.

He said it was a happy coincidence that the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's liberation and the milestone of the 75th year of India's independence arrived together. For both the countries, the journey over the next 25 years would be very important.

Modi said Bangladesh and India have a common heritage, common goals, possibilities and common challenges too but "we also face similar threats, such as terrorism".

"The ideologies and forces behind these inhuman acts are active even today. We not only need to be alert, but also need to stay united to fight them."

He said both the countries have demonstrated that with mutual trust and cooperation, solutions could be found for all issues, like the Land Boundary Agreement and cooperation during this pandemic.

"The future of India and Bangladesh is just waiting for countless such moments full of goodwill and mutual trust."

He stressed on better connections between the young men and women of the countries. Modi invited 50 young entrepreneurs to India to mark the 50th anniversary of India-Bangladesh relations and to connect with their startups and innovation ecosystems and meet venture capitalists for an exchange of learnings.

He also announced Subamo Jayanti scholarships for the young men and women of Bangladesh.

Modi said he was pleased that Bangladesh was showing its dynamism to the world under Prime Minister Hasina's leadership, proving wrong those who had objected to the creation of Bangladesh, looked down upon the people of Bangladesh, and those who had apprehended the existence of Bangladesh.

Hasina paid tribute to the three million martyrs, and the women violated in 1971. She thanked Modi for gracing the occasion, honoring Bangabandhu by the Gandhi Peace Prize and arranging Babu-Bangabandhu Digital Museum, and the gifts of 109 ambulances and Covid-19 vaccine shots.

She said India always stands by Bangladesh, regardless of which political party is in power.

Recalling the horrors of 1975, when Bangabandhu and most of his family members were assassinated, Hasina said she and her sister Sheikh Rehana were then in Germany.

Subsequently, India had sheltered them until they returned to Bangladesh in 1981.

"The assassins wanted Bangladesh to be devoid of ideologies. No nation can achieve anything without an ideology," Hasina said.

The Awami League eventually gathered strength and assumed power after 21 years and honored 225 Indian leaders and citizens.

"Now, our relationship with India has reached a new height," she said, adding that cooperation on vaccine, trade, agriculture, and connectivity has strengthened.

Hasina said Bangabandhu believed in regional cooperation and mutual trust. A strong South Asia is possible if India, the major regional power, comes forward. The region is the most-densely populated in the world but also has immense potentials.

She said Bangladesh aspires to achieve the development goals by 2030 and become a developed nation by 2041.

"At such a joyous moment, let us pledge to forget all the divisions, work for the development of people and establish a prosperous South Asia."

PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

At the event, President Abdul Hamid called for establishing principles, values and ideals in all sectors and for development of efficient leadership.

Noting that the nation's development was not the responsibility of only political leadership, he said, "As citizens of an independent country, it is the duty and responsibility of all of us."

He urged all to carry out their respective duties with honesty and sincerity to make the country's independence meaningful and disseminate its benefits to the masses. He emphasised spreading the principles of Bangabandhu.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen called on Modi at Hotel Sonargaon.

"I told him [Modi] that we [Bangladesh] do expect welfare of all people in the region in the next 50 years," Momen said afterwards.

He said the Indian premier assured Bangladesh of the promised three crore Covid-19 vaccine doses in due time.

The foreign minister sought India's strong support in resolving the Rohingya crisis as India became United Nations Security Council (UNSC) member.

Today, Modi will visit Jashorehswari Kali Temple in Shyamnagar of Sattkira, Harichand Thakur's Temple in Orakandi and meet Matua community, and Bangabandhu Memorial in Tungipara.

In the afternoon, the two premiers will hold a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office where they are scheduled to inaugurate some projects and sign of several MoUs.

Britain says HK 'has no right to dictate' passport recognition

AFP, Hong Kong

Britain told Hong Kong yesterday that it had "no right" to order other countries not to accept a UK travel document for a popular youth working scheme after the city confirmed it had made the request to several other nations.

The row is the latest diplomatic spat centering on the British National (Overseas) passport as China imposes a sweeping crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong.

The BNO passport is a legacy of Hong Kong's handover to China by colonial Britain in 1997.

Until recently it allowed Hong Kongers born before 1997 greater travel privileges to the UK but no working or settling rights.

But after Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law on the city last year, Britain began offering a pathway to citizenship for BNO passport holders and their families.

In response, Hong Kong and China said it would no longer recognise the BNO passport as a legitimate travel document.

Later Thursday, Hong Kong confirmed media reports that it had recently written to 14 consulates telling them not to allow young people to use their BNO passports to apply for working holiday visas in Europe, North America and parts of Asia.

"Hong Kong participants under the Working Holiday Scheme should be confined to holders of the HKSAR passport," a spokesperson of Hong Kong's Labour Department added in a statement.

That sparked anger in Britain, which said countries had the right to make their own rules on which travel documents they accept for identification.

17 killed

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He said they recovered at least 11 charred bodies, including two children and four women, from the vehicle.

Firefighters rescued eight people from near the charred vehicle, three of them had burn injuries. Six of them, including two children and a woman, died of their injuries at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, he said.

Hearing the news, Sergeant Nur Mohammad of Bangladesh Army visited the scene. He said, the dead include five of his family members: his sister Nazma Khatun, 28, Nazma's husband Ful Mia, 35, their son Faisal Ahmed, 13, and daughters Samiha, 8, and Sumaiya, 4.

Police said the others who died include: Salahuddin, his wife Shamsunnahar, and their children Sajid and Saba, Shamsunnahar's sister Kamrunnahar, and Tajul Islam, his wife Mukta, and son Yamin. Another man who died was named Mokhlesur.

There were 13 passengers in the HiAce, Sergeant Nur said. The 13 people of four families boarded the microbus from their homes in Pirganj, Rangpur.

They were going to Rajshahi on holiday and intended to visit tourist destinations. They were supposed to have lunch at Nur Mohammad's home.

"I prepared their lunch. But none of them are alive now. I have seen the bodies. Police say there is nothing left to see," he told this correspondent.

Police said the others who died were passengers of the bus.

Daily Covid-19

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Among the total infections, 90.45 percent patients recovered, while 1.50 percent so far died since the first Covid-19 positive cases were reported in the country on March 8 last year.

Among yesterday's 33 deaths, 21 are male and 12 female, the DGH said, adding that four are in their 40s, 14 in their 50s while 15 are above 60 years.

According to the division-wise data, 26 people died in Dhaka Division.

Among the total 8,830 fatalities, 5,000 people died in Dhaka division, 1,615 in Chattogram division, 490 in Rajshahi division, 571 in Khulna division, 267 in Barisal division, 316 in Sylhet division, 371 in Rangpur division and 200 in Mymensingh division, according to the press release.

A total of 45,42,030 samples have so far been tested since the detection of the first Covid-19 cases in the country.

World leaders

FROM PAGE 1
Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R Miller, reflecting on how the strong partnership between the US and Bangladesh was formed based on their shared commitments to democracy and human rights.

"I look forward to working with you to strengthen these commitments to build an even brighter future for the people of our nations over the next 50 years and beyond," said Biden.

Your hosting of one million Rohingya refugees is an example to the world of humanity and generosity. The United States will continue to be a steadfast partner in finding a durable solution to this crisis."

He also applauded Bangladesh's commitment on climate change and reiterated his administration's pledge to cooperate with Bangladesh on this issue.

Putin's message was read out by Alexander Ignatov, Russia's ambassador to Bangladesh.

"I am confident that through our joint efforts we will ensure the further development of constructive bilateral cooperation in various fields for the benefit of our peoples in the interest of strengthening regional security and stability," he said.

In a pre-recorded video message, Boris Johnson recalled how instrumental Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's UK visit in 1972 was in forging the friendship between the two countries.

"The bond between us is incarnated by the 600,000-strong British-Bangladeshi who contribute so much to the United Kingdom every day. I think particularly of the fantastic doctors and nurses in our National Health Service, many of whom are helping to treat and vaccinate our people in our battle against Covid-19."

"Today, Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and we share the commitment to create an evermore prosperous and environmentally sustainable future," added the United Kingdom PM.

In his message, he fondly remembered being welcomed to Bangladesh with a great deal of warmth and generosity in 2018 and said that he looked forward to working with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the upcoming COP26 in Glasgow.

Imran Khan in his message said, "I extend a cordial invitation to Your Excellency to visit Pakistan at the earliest convenience. I am confident that this would open a new chapter in our fraternal relations," said Khan.

"We would like to fortify our existing bonds with brotherly Bangladesh and build new ones for our succeeding generations, as we believe the destinies of our two peoples are intertwined."

"On this occasion, let us renew our resolve to jointly work for a better future for our peoples and closer ties between our two countries," he mentioned.

In his message, Erdogan said, "The sentiments of brotherhood among our peoples, rooted in our common historical and cultural heritage,

Independence Day celebrated

FROM PAGE 1

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prince of Wales Charles, and Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan sent letters and video messages on the closing day of the celebrations.

Earlier, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, Nepalese President Bidya Devi Bhandari and Bhutanese Prime Minister Lotay Tshering joined the celebrations in person.

Marking the Independence Day, the government took up programmes which were held maintaining health guidelines. Due to the pandemic, the day was celebrated on a limited scale.

The day's programmes began with a 50-gun salute early in the morning. The national flag was hoisted atop all government, semi-government, autonomous and private buildings while many streets and important city intersections were decorated with national and multi-coloured miniature flags and festoons.

In the morning, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid rich tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War by placing wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar. They stood in silence for some time as a mark of profound respect to

the memories of the martyrs.

Later, the president and the PM signed the visitors' book there.

Bangabandhu's younger daughter Sheikh Rehana, Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, senior Awami League leaders and high civil and military officials, among others, were present.

The JS Speaker and the chief justice also paid tribute to the martyrs by placing wreaths at the National Memorial.

Awami League, led by party General Secretary Obaidul Quader, also paid tribute there by placing a wreath in presence of senior party leaders.

Just after the completion of the state formalities, the main entrance to the National Memorial was opened to all.

Jatiya Party, BNP, Workers Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, NAP, Gono Forum, Ganatantri Party, Jubo League, Chhatra League, Swechhasebak League, Krishak League and different other political parties placed wreaths.

On her return from the National Memorial, PM Hasina paid rich tributes to the Father of the Nation by placing wreaths at his portrait in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in the capital's Dhanmondi.