

Country observes PM's 75th birthday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 75th birthday of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was observed across the country yesterday in a joyous manner.

The capital donned a festive look with banners of the PM at different street corners.

Awami League and its associate bodies celebrated the day through various events and discussions on the life and achievements of Sheikh Hasina, who is currently in the USA.



The programmes included holding colourful rallies, discussions, special doa and milad mahfils.

In the morning, AL and its associate bodies brought out jubilant processions in the capital and across the country. Events were held in districts, cities, upazilas, municipalities and unions.

A discussion was held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, marking the day. Addressing the discussion, AL general secretary Obaidul Quader said the PM has reached her current position through a long struggle and has now become a world leader.

Milad, doa mahfils and special prayers were organised at mosques, temples and pagodas across the country.

Bangladesh Chhatra League brought out a procession from Madhur Canteen on DU campus yesterday noon, which paraded different streets of the campus and ended in a rally.

Marking the day, a book titled "Sheikh Hasina: The Story of a Blossoming Bangladesh" was launched yesterday in Bangladesh Mission in Kolkata.

Subrata Mukherjee, panchayat and rural development minister of West Bengal, unveiled the book, a collection of 15 essays written by prominent personalities of Kolkata, which was edited and compiled by Dr Md Mofakkarul

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The sky was overcast for most of yesterday. From infrequent drizzles to chilly winds, it had all the makings of a late monsoon day. Let's hope this is a sign of transitioning into the cooler part of the calendar, away from the heat that marred the last couple months' mood. This photo was taken from the Bangabandhu National Stadium's outer stadium area.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

2 more die of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least two more dengue patients died while 219 patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday. Of them, 52 are from outside the capital, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With the new cases, a total of 7,434 were diagnosed during the current month, out of a total of 17,790 infected. Of them, 2,229 are from outside Dhaka.

At least 7,698 people were diagnosed in August, 2,286 were hospitalised in July, 272 in June, while 43 were infected in May.

Meanwhile, 65 people have died of dengue this year. Twelve people died in July, 34 in August, and 19 in September so far.

Among the deaths, 60 have died in Dhaka division, two each in Chattogram division and Khulna, and one died in Rajshahi division.

Though most of the patients who were hospitalised have so far been released, 954 are still undergoing treatment at hospitals in Dhaka, and 218 outside the capital.

A life lost to negligence

Rage sweeps across port city after 19-year-old dies slipping into unprotected drain

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

A university student died after falling into a roadside drain at the port city's Agrabad Badamtoli area on Monday night. The fourth such death in the last four months, the incident sparked major anger among citizens all over the city.

Deceased Sehrin Mahub Sadia (19) was a first year honours student of International Islamic University Chittagong's computer science department.

She first went missing after falling into the drain around 10pm while returning home from a doctor's appointment with her grandfather and uncle. It was drizzling at the time, and witnesses and officials said the slippery condition of the road enabled the incident.

Divers of Fire Service and Civil Defence recovered her body around five hours later, around 3:10am

yesterday, some 100ft away from the spot.

Eyewitnesses and fire service officials said right after she fell in, her uncle and grandfather jumped into the drain too, but could not prevent her tragic demise.

"She was walking with me, holding my hand. Before I could realise, she slipped into the drain," said a grief-stricken Hazi Jamal Ahmed, Sadia's grandfather. "Without hesitation, I jumped in too, and so did my son (her uncle), but to no avail."

On information, fire service divers rushed to the spot and started the rescue operation, but their task was made difficult by all the waste that filled up the drain, said Newton Das, deputy director of Fire Service and Civil Defence, Chattogram.

Moreover, the drain's size was another factor. Long and deep, it ends at the city's Berek Building intersection, some two kilometres away from the spot.

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The tragic incident occurred at this drain in Agrabad's Badamtoli area. Unprotected the night before, when mild showers were sweeping across the city, the authorities have since propped up bamboo barriers around it yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Where will all the students stay?

As RU halls remain shut, 1.28 lakh admission seekers may not find proper accommodation

ANWAR ALI with ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Every year, during Rajshahi University's (RU) admission tests, the institute's halls welcome thousands of admission seekers from different corners of the country. According

foreign students. All of them can accommodate a total of 8,000 students in regular times. During admission tests, however, the halls arrange accommodation for nearly at least six times the capacity, teachers and students said.

Talking to The Daily Star, the VC said he had proposed to the hall provosts' council for opening halls for a limited time during tests.

"The provosts' council declined the proposal. The provosts are teachers,

ADMISSION SITUATION IN RAJSHAHI



- 1.28 lakh students to sit for RU tests on Oct 4-6
- DU also holding tests for 36,000 Rajshahi students
- Halls of educational institutions closed
- Students already occupying private dorms amid academic activities
- All hotel rooms already booked

to teachers, student leaders and guardians, the dormitories usually house around 50 percent of admission seekers, particularly students from non-affluent families and those from far flung areas.

This year, however, admission seekers are likely to face an acute accommodation crisis. Although the tests will be held in the first week of October, authorities are keeping the campus halls shut.

RU Vice Chancellor Prof Golam Sabbir Sattar told The Daily Star that opening halls during the pandemic would be risky. He also argued that he did not get enough time to decide, as the tests were scheduled before he became VC in late August.

Some 1.28 lakh admission seekers, divided under three units, are likely to sit for the tests, scheduled to be held in three shifts per day on October 4, 5 and 6.

Meanwhile, Dhaka University (DU) is also holding admission tests of some 36,000 students from Rajshahi division's eight districts on October 1, 2, 9, 22 and 23 in Rajshahi city.

RU has 11 residential halls for men, six for women and one for

Although arranging admission seekers' stay is not the university's responsibility, it is an age-old tradition, they said.

Other than accommodating students in rooms, authorities usually allow admission seekers to stay in auditoriums, mosques, dining rooms, and sometimes other open spaces, including verandas of the halls.

They also stay at Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology, Rajshahi Medical College, and other educational institutes. But this time, all halls of the other institutions are closed as well.

Ashiq Sadik, guardian of an admission seeker from Savar, said he had been trying to manage a seat (dorm accommodation) for his son for the last three weeks. "I couldn't arrange one. I don't know anyone in the city. I don't know whether I'll take my son to Rajshahi."

Sagar Parvez, a student of Barishal, said he managed a room at a private dormitory at a higher price.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi's Sacheton Nagorik Committee submitted a memorandum to the RU VC, urging authorities to open halls during the

and they found it difficult to ready halls for opening at a time when they had to hold classes and exams," he said.

Besides, the VC said provosts refused to open halls before the vaccination of at least 80 percent of RU students. Some 50 percent of students have been vaccinated so far.

Contacted, convener of the provosts' council Prof Md Ekram Hossain said, "We can't open halls for those who are not our students yet."

He said if the university authority takes a decision in this regard, they would follow through.

After a series of meetings with RU authorities and Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) till yesterday, private dormitory owners have announced to make their accommodation facilities free of cost for admission seekers.

Contacted, Md Enayetur Rahman, president of Rajshahi City Private Dormitory Owners Association, said, "We decided this on humanitarian ground."

He said some 30 percent of the city's 5,000 private dorms were closed

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Fake news deterrence to progress: speakers

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Fake news and misinformation are a severe deterrence to the progress of any nation, and it can act as a major threat to society if not dealt with now, media and security analysts have said.

They said a new era of alternative truth has prevailed, and it has been difficult to keep up with it.

"If not dealt with now, fake news can act as a major, and perhaps lethal, threat to society," said Shafiqat Munir, research fellow of the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), at a workshop yesterday.

The interactive event was attended by young professionals, students and youth representatives from various disciplines, according to a press statement.

At the workshop - "Developing a Critical Understanding against Fake News & Disinformation", organised by BIPSS at a hotel in the capital - he said society has evolved at a rapid pace in the last decade but so have the methods of producing fake news.

Key information, such as the legitimacy of the Covid-19 vaccine, are put under question due to propaganda. Therefore, it is of paramount importance for individuals to know how to discern fake news from authentic ones, especially for the youth, Munir said.

"The most prioritised target audience of misinformation is the youth. They are a vulnerable population and it is important for us to make sure they can distinguish between what is authentic and what is fake," said Maj Gen ANM Muniruzzaman.

He further added that the impact of misinformation is

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App-based Drivers' Union of Bangladesh yesterday demonstrated in front of Chattogram Press Club to press home their six-point demand. The protest was part of their 24-hour abstention, a day after a ride-sharing biker set his vehicle on fire, as officials tried to fine him for traffic violation.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Make accessing info from govt easier

Speakers demand at human chain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government must make it easier for the public to access information and hold institutions accountable, said speakers at an event.

Shujan (Shushanor Jonno Nagorik) and The Hunger Project jointly organised a human chain yesterday, demanding easier access to information from the government.

The demonstration was held in front of the National Museum at the capital's Shabbagh to commemorate the International Day for Universal Access to Information.

The demands made at the demonstration include shortening the time required to provide information -- which currently has a time limit of 30 days from the date of filing of a request -- and more awareness campaigns to enlighten the general public about their right to access information from the government.

"The government must broadcast the fact that this right ensures transparency and accountability from public and private organisations," they said.

To that effect, they also suggested incorporating the concept of this right in school and college curricula.

The organisers also demanded that journalists, social scientists and legal experts be incorporated into the Information Commission, which is currently comprised of bureaucrats.

Online services too must be initiated to make it easier for the general public to request information, they said.

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