



President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina pay tributes to the Liberation War martyrs at National Memorial in Savar yesterday morning.

PHOTO: P1D

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President, PM pay homage to martyrs

AGENCIES

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid rich tributes to the Liberation War martyrs at Savar's National Memorial yesterday morning.

The head of the state first placed a wreath at the altar of the memorial, followed by the prime minister, marking the 52nd Independence and National Day, reports BSS.

After placing wreaths, the president and the prime minister stood in solemn silence for a while, as a mark of profound respect to the memories of the martyrs of the Liberation War.

A smartly turned-out contingent drawn from the Bangladesh Army, Navy and the Air Force paid the state salute on the occasion, while the bugles played the last post.

HASINA PAYS HOMAGE TO BANGABANDHU

The country celebrated the 52nd Independence and National Day yesterday, with a fresh vow to take the nation towards prosperity, with the Liberation War's spirit.

On the occasion, the PM also paid tributes to the Father of the Nation by placing a wreath at his portrait in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi 32.

Flanked by party leaders, Hasina, also president of the Awami League, placed another wreath on behalf of the party.

Later, the prime minister entered Bangabandhu Memorial Museum and spent some time there.

Two agencies for similar work

Subway to come under BBA's jurisdiction; experts warn of 'conflict' with DMTCL, which is in charge of metro-rail projects

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) is going to get jurisdiction to carry out feasibility study and construction of the subway, a train-based mass transit system.

Moreover, if a person creates obstacles or hindrances to the construction, development, operation or maintenance of any BBA structure, they may face up to one-year in jail.

The government is set to amend the Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) Act-2016 to bring these changes within the scope of the act. The Bridge Division has already prepared a draft for the amendment and put it up on its website on Thursday

» Govt set to amend Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) Act

» BBA already started feasibility study to build subway network

» It is planning to form company to build infrastructure

» Giving jurisdiction to BBA will complicate matters, say experts

“Although subway or metro rail related issues are dealt by the railways ministry in other countries, the government has already created DMTCL with around 1,900 staffers to build and operate metro rail. Given this, developing subway under BBA will create a ‘conflicting situation’ and will not serve the original purpose of creating a comprehensive transport network.”

PROF SHAMSUL HOQUE, Transport Expert

to get public opinion.

The development comes at a time when BBA has already started a feasibility study to build a subway network in Dhaka and adjacent areas. A seminar over the final draft of the study will be held on Tuesday, which was initiated in 2018.

Besides, BBA is also planning to form a company to implement its plan to build the network, though there is a separate government company – Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL) – tasked with developing a 130-km underground and elevated metro rail network in Dhaka and adjacent areas.

Meanwhile, experts have raised questions over the

new decisions.

“Subway is a specialised transport for urban areas,” transport expert Prof Shamsul Hoque told The Daily Star yesterday. “Urban transport is not under the purview of BBA. So giving jurisdiction of subway to BBA will complicate the situation.”

Although subway or metro rail related issues are dealt by the railways ministry in other countries, the government has already created DMTCL with around 1,900 staffers to build and operate metro rail, he said.

Given this, developing subway under BBA will create a “conflicting situation” and will not serve the original purpose of creating a comprehensive transport network, he added.

Contacted, Bridge Division Secretary Monjur Hossain said they have prepared the draft and shared it with agencies concerned. The draft will be finalised upon receiving their opinions.

Asked about the possibility of conflict between BBA and DMTCL, he told this correspondent yesterday, “The government will take decision in this regard, considering all aspects.”

He, however, said subways are already under BBA's jurisdiction, after changes were made in the allocation of business of different ministries and divisions last year, after which the subway was incorporated in the draft.

It is worth noting that many sections of the metro rail projects would be underground. And the new draft mentions that sections of the subway, which is generally supposed to be underground, can be elevated as well. This means that both infrastructures have

similarities in regards to their physical design.

THE DRAFT

As per the existing BBA act, BBA will take initiative for carrying out survey, feasibility study, technical research for bridge (above 1.5km), tunnel, flyover, elevated expressway, causeway and ring road, along with their implementation.

If the proposed amendment is approved, subways will come under BBA's purview.

The draft said two more sub-sections (16-Ka and 16-Kha) will be added after sub-section 16 of section 2, where the definition of different elements are mentioned.

As per the definition mentioned in 16-ka, subways can be expanded on land or be elevated along the underground section.

A new section (28 Ka), as per the draft, will be added to the act after section 28, which sees it as a punishable offence for a person to create obstacle or hindrance to the construction, development, operation or maintenance of any structure of BBA.

For the offence, the offender may get one-year in jail or Tk 2 lakh fine or both, reads the draft.

Besides, eight more amendments were mentioned in the draft.

SUBWAY PLAN

Instructed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, BBA originally assigned a consortium to carry out the feasibility study and preliminary design of the 90-km subway. However, the project got revised later, after it carried out a feasibility study for a 238-km subway network project at the cost of Tk 321 crore.

In the draft feasibility study submitted on March 15, they proposed a 258-km subway network consisting of 11 routes.

At a programme on March 24 last year, BBA officials said the 130-km MRT network should be complimented with a subway system for better coverage and connectivity. They have already sent a proposal to Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority to incorporate the subway in the revised strategic transport plan (RSTP).

Though the construction of a subway network has long been discussed, the option was not included in the RSTP for Dhaka approved in 2015, reportedly because it is not feasible for an unplanned city like Dhaka.

Towards peace and prosperity

World leaders greet Bangladesh on Independence Day

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

World leaders have greeted Bangladeshi people and its leadership on the country's Independence Day, pledging to boost their relationship with Bangladesh for prosperity and stability.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said his country is committed to expanding ties with Bangladesh so that both nations can thrive together.

“Both of our countries emerged after intense struggles for independence and we both strive to live up to our founding democratic ideals,” he said in a message yesterday.

Over the last five decades, the two countries continued cooperation in ensuring a safer and more prosperous future and it will continue for the generations to come, Blinken said, while applauding Bangladesh's impressive economic and developmental achievements.

Lauding the country's commitment to keeping the world safe as the largest contributor to peacekeeping operations, the US Secretary of State said, “Our defence, developmental, commercial and people-to-people partnership is stronger than ever.”

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin has congratulated President Md Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

He emphasised that the relations between Russia and Bangladesh are based on the good traditions of friendship and mutual respect.

He expressed confidence that through joint efforts, governments of the two countries will ensure further development of constructive bilateral cooperation in political, trade, economic, humanitarian and other spheres.

“This cooperation undoubtedly meets the

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PRAYER
TIMING
MAR 27

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	4-45	12-45	4-45	6-20	7-45
Jamaat	5-20	1-15	5-00	6-25	8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Two DU students beaten up at dorm

UNB, Dhaka

Two residential students of Dhaka University (DU) were allegedly beaten up by 10-12 people at Bijoy Ekattor Hall yesterday morning.

One of the injured, Akhlaquzzaman Anik told the news agency that the attackers were followers of the dormitory unit BCL president Sajibur Rahman Sajib.

“They entered my room around 8:30am and beat me up me badly,” he added.

Anik was later taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital by other students and teachers.

On the possible reason for the attack, Anik said, “Three days ago, one of the attackers went to Suhrawardy Udyan with a female friend. He later claimed that I abused them there.”

Sajib, however, said the hall administration would take actions against the perpetrators of the alleged attack. “We will co-operate with the authorities in their probe.”

Contacted, Bijoy Ekattor Hall provost Prof Dr Abdul Bashir said, “I have heard about the attack but did not receive any written complaint yet.”



No Covid deaths for 9 days since Mar 15: DGHS

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh has reported no Covid-19 deaths in nine out of the past 12 days.

The country also reported 102 Covid positive cases in the past 24 hours.

“The country logged zero virus-related fatality nine times between March 15 and 26... meaning deaths were only reported on March 18, March 20 and March 23,” said sources at Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Bangladesh reported 0.89 percent Covid-19 positive cases, as 7,336 samples were tested in the past 24 hours.

The country also recorded zero coronavirus deaths for the first time on November 20, 2021 since

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As summer approaches with an unsettling heat, some refreshment in the form of freshly made cold lemonades have been an attraction to many. These two high-schoolers were seen sharing a smile with their vendor while getting a glass of cold lemonade from him. The photo was taken in Dhaka University's TSC area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

‘A govt for people, by people’

BNP vows to restore democracy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar



BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the party will restore democracy, free Khaleda Zia and bring its acting chairman Tarique Rahman back to the country.

He was talking to the media after paying homage to the martyrs at the National Memorial in Savar around 9:30am.

“We are paying homage to the martyrs after 50 years of independence.

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