

Nation bids farewell to Muhith

STAR REPORT

Tributes continue to pour in for AMA Muhith – former finance minister, economist, diplomat, freedom fighter, Language Movement veteran, writer and historian. After the shocking news of his death, the country's people, including intellectuals and leaders, have recalled the impacts he made in many fields.

Sylhet is prepared to bid the final farewell to Muhith, while the district unit of Awami League has declared two days of mourning.

Muhith's body will be placed in front of Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar at noon today, to let people from all walks of life pay their respects to the veteran politician, said Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury, acting president of AL's Sylhet district unit.

After Zohr prayers, his last namaz-e-janaza will take place in the field of Sylhet Government Alia Madrasa. Muhith will be laid to rest at his family graveyard in Sylhet city's Raynagar area, beside the graves of his parents.

Shafiqur said AL has declared two days of mourning and a "black-badge wearing" programme, marking the demise of Muhith, who was also parliamentarian from Sylhet-1.

After being taken from Dhaka, his body will be kept at his ancestral home in Sylhet city in a freezer van, reports our Sylhet correspondent.

Muhith passed away in the early hours of yesterday at the capital's United Hospital. He was 88.

PRESIDENT, PM PAY TRIBUTES

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock and sorrow at Muhith's demise, reports UNB.

In her condolence message, the PM said despite being a member of the Civil Service of Pakistan, Muhith joined the first government of Bangladesh in 1971. At the time, he was posted in the Pakistan embassy of the US.

"A successful economist and politician, the Independence Award winner will be remembered by all for his works," Hasina said.

Muhith's brother Foreign Minister Abdul Momen, Speaker of Jatiya Sangsad Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Finance Minister Mustafa Kamal, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam, and FBCCI President Md Jashim Uddin also expressed deep shock and sorrow.

In separate messages, Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad and Bangladesh High Commissioner to the UK Saida Muna Tasneem expressed their condolences.

TRIBUTES POUR IN

People from all walks of life paid their respects to Muhith at the capital's Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

The AL advisory council member's body was taken there around noon, where tributes were paid on behalf of the president, PM, and members of various political, social and cultural organisations.

On behalf of the president, his military secretary Maj Gen SM Salahuddin Islam, and on behalf of the PM, her military secretary Brig Gen Kabir Ahmed paid homage.

Sergeant-at-arms Commodore MM Naim Rahman paid homage on behalf of the Speaker.

Led by AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader, party presidium members Matia Chowdhury, Nurul Islam Nahid and Abdur Razzak; AL Joint General Secretary Jahangir Kabir Nanak; Information Minister Hasan Mahmud; Planning Minister MA Mannan; Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman; AK Azad of DU Alumni Association; Hasanul Haque Inu of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal; journalist Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul; Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon; Gonoshasthaya Kendra Trustee Jafarullah Chowdhury; DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh; Indian High Commission; Dhaka Metropolitan Chamber and Commerce; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and National University paid tributes.

After paying homage, Quader said, "I've rarely seen 'crazy' people like him. He used to be immersed in work and studies, from morning to night, even on holidays. He's also successful as an economist and finance minister. The most important thing is that there are not

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



People from all walks of life, including the country's leaders and intellectuals, thronged the capital's Central Shaheed Minar yesterday to pay their respects to AMA Muhith. There, ministers, politicians and heads of organisations recalled the contributions of the former finance minister, economist and diplomat.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Owners cash in on legal loopholes

Thousands of ship-breaking workers deprived of festival bonus



PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Using a loophole in the labour act, ship-breaking yard owners are depriving thousands of workers of festival bonuses, which is, according to the workers, a great injustice ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr.

Sub section-5 of Section-III of Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, formulated under the law in 2015, allows the owners to deprive workers. The provision states that festival bonuses cannot be more than the basic salary for those who worked for one year in any yard. But it does not specify how meagre the bonus can be.

The government declared the minimum wage for ship-breaking workers in 2016: Tk 16,000 for new workers. The basic salary for these workers was fixed at Tk 8,000. However, no yard has implemented the

wages yet, defying the law.

Dismantling ships is one of the deadliest jobs in the world, given the lack of safety measures and presence of toxic substances inside expired ships.

Workplace accidents claim workers' lives quite often.

Out of 106, around 60 yards are operational in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila. They remain one of the most dangerous workplaces, due to lax implementation of environmental and safety laws. Around 25,000 workers are engaged in demolishing worn out ships in these yards.

Tapan Dutta, president of Ship-breaking Trade Union Forum, told The Daily Star that taking advantage of the loophole, many yard owners offer as low as Tk 500 to the workers. Some owners even refuse to pay.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Moon Sighting Committee meets today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Moon Sighting Committee will meet this evening to fix the date of Eid-ul-Fitr, the biggest religious festival of the Muslims.

The Islamic Foundation yesterday issued a press release, saying that the meeting will be held at its Baitul Mukarram office after the Maghrib prayers for reviewing information on the sighting of Shawwal moon.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Mohammad Faridul Haque Khan, president of the committee, will preside over the meeting, said the release.

People have been requested to inform the committee through the following phone and fax numbers if they see the moon anywhere in Bangladesh's sky.

The phone numbers are: 02-223381725, 02-41050912, 02-41050916, and 02-41050917 while the fax numbers are: 02-223383397 and 02-9555951.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Eid won't bring any joy to them

Says Fakhru'l family members of enforced disappearance victims

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru'l Islam Alamgir yesterday said the family members of the victims of enforced disappearance, including that of Ilias Ali, are going through serious problems in absence of their near and dear ones.

Talking to reporters after visiting the home of missing BNP leader Ilias in Dhaka's Banani, he also alleged that the government has so far not taken any initiative to trace the victims because of its involvement in these incidents.

"The situation would have been different had the government taken any initiative to find out the people who were subjected to enforced disappearance. But no such effort of the government was seen since it is involved (in these

“Not only Ilias Ali's family, but all the families of the victims of enforced disappearance are also going through a tough time.”



incidents)," Fakhru'l said.

He said people saw that law enforcers had picked up Ilias and his driver from Banani a decade ago.

Fakhru'l along with BNP joint secretary general Sayed Moazzem Hossain Alal went to Ilias' home at noon and talked to his wife Tahsina Rushdir Luna and other family members.

He also presented them with Eid gifts.

The BNP leader said Ilias' family had to face a lot of problems, including financial crisis and over their daughter's college admission as some colleges were not allowing it. "Not only Ilias Ali's family, but all the families of the victims of enforced disappearance are also going through a tough time."



HOMEWARD BOUND... With Eid just days away, thousands of people were seen on the Airport Railway Station platform yesterday afternoon. Some were looking for their designated train or coach, while others were chatting or buying food -- preparing for the long journey home, to spend the holiday with their loved ones.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Children aged 5-12 to get Covid jabs from June

Says health minister

STAR REPORT

Covid-19 vaccination campaign to inoculate children aged between 5 and 12 will begin from June this year, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said on Friday.

A special kind of Pfizer vaccine has been developed for children, which will be administered to them, he informed.

He made this remark while addressing an iftar mahfil as chief guest, held at Shuvra Centre in Manikganj, reports our local correspondent.

He added that people will have to follow health guidelines as Covid-19 is

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6