



Bangabandhu lucky to have Bangamata as partner: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was fortunate enough to have Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib as his life partner who provided him immense strength to work for the country's independence and welfare of the people.

The PM was addressing a programme marking the birth anniversary of Bangamata. She also distributed Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Padak 2022 at the function.

"It was easy for my father to devote fully to the struggle for achieving independence of the country as he got such wonderful life partner and parents beside him," said Hasina.

She said it would have been very tough for Bangabandhu to work for the country and keep full concentration in politics had he not been blessed with a life partner like her mother.

"... if she had kept nagging her husband about various demands, it would have been a tough job for my father."

Hasina said her mother had been gifted with an unusual mental strength to face any problem with courage and adjust her life with difficult situations.

She further said her mother also brought them up in that way and taught her children to face hostile situations with courage.

The PM said political decisions that her mother had made proved helpful for the country's independence movement.

"My mother's attention was on everything that was for the good of the country and its people."

The premier said her mother was confident that the country would attain independence, and this conviction of her mother was very helpful for her father.

"On August 15, she did not beg for her life. She rather sacrificed her life."

Hasina asked the women of the country to be imbued with Bangamata's ideology.

Noted writer Anwara Syed Haq presented the keynote paper on the life and sacrifices of Bangamata.

The award recipients are: Syeda Zebunnesa Haque (Sylhet) in politics, lawmaker Selima Ahmed (Cumilla) in economics, former Dhaka University pro-vice chancellor Nasreen Ahmad in education, Achhia Alam (Kishoreganj) in social service and valiant freedom fighter of Gopalganj Ashalata Baidya (commander during the Liberation War) in independence and Liberation War.

A documentary on Bangamata

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This handout picture taken and released by Yangon People's Strike yesterday, shows protesters walking through Yangon in Myanmar with umbrellas bearing in Burmese the number 8 during a rally to mark the anniversary of the August 8, 1988 democracy uprising against a previous junta.

PHOTO: AFP

Donate to get your funds released

BCCT MD 'forces' project officials to pay to his personal foundation

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

The managing director of Bangladesh Climate Change Trust has been collecting "donations" in exchange for releasing cheques to the projects under the trust, violating government servant conduct rules.

Directors of projects under BCCT said some of its officials have been collecting "donations" for Rizia-Aziz Foundation in exchange for releasing cheques for the projects. BCCT Managing Director Md Rezaul Haque runs the foundation named after his parents.

The "forced donations" taken from project directors for the release of each cheque ranges from Tk 5,000 to Tk 20,000, according to a number of PDs, who opted for anonymity fearing harassment in project implementation.

BCCT MD Rezaul Haque said, "It is not taken forcefully. Apart from this, I also take donations from my friends, and relatives. Anyone can contribute willingly."

According to an order of the public administration ministry yesterday, he has been transferred to the ministry as part of his leave preparatory to retirement (LPR).

According to the Section 9 of

Government Servant Conduct Rules-1979, no government servant can ask, take part in collection or receiving of any fund unless there is specific directive from the government. Violation of the rule will be treated as misconduct and will prompt disciplinary action against the violator under Government Servant (discipline and appeal) rules-1985.

Various government organisations submit project proposals to the BCCT, which aims to mitigate climate change impact, and aid in adaptation and resilience.

BCCT approves and delivers funds in phases for projects it deems necessary to reduce the impact caused by climate change.

Rezaul Haque became BCCT managing director on September, 15, 2021, and has approved 63 projects.

"The money is taken when the PDs turn up at the BCCT for the release of the fund in the form of a cheque," said an official involved in a project.

Sources within the BCCT with knowledge of the matter told this newspaper that Kamrul Islam, a computer operator at the BCCT, used to collect the money.

He, however, told The Daily Star that he was no longer involved.

"When MD sir [Rezaul Haque] first came [to office], he asked us to take the money for this [to release cheques for projects]. When we refused to do so, the job went to the accounts department," Kamrul said.

He claimed that for the last seven or eight months, the accounts department had been taking care of it.

Md Aktheruzzaman, accounts officer of the BCCT, said, "MD sir can say better. You can talk to sir. We just release the cheques."

Rezaul Haque initially denied the PDs' "donations" to his foundation, but when asked if Aktheruzzaman took donations, Rezaul said that it was correct.

He said the foundation helps people in financial hardship, and provides students with scholarships.

Asked whether he can take the money as a government official, he refused to comment.

Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, told The Daily Star that it was extortion.

"The money is taken during fund disbursement. As a government servant, he can't do it. It's a conflict of interest. The government must ensure accountability of the BCCT official," he added.

The foundation, according to a copy of the money receipt The Daily Star obtained, was located at Warsi Pikepara union under Tangail's Mirzapur Upazila.



TANGAIL BUS ROBBERY

One suspect involved in 10 robberies: Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Since 2018, Ratan Hossain, the mastermind behind the bus robbery and gang rape in Tangail on August 2, has been working as a bus helper.

And while on duty, the 21-year-old from Madhupur upazila of Tangail had been collecting information to carry out bus robberies.

For instance, in the last six months, he has committed at least 10 robberies, said Khandaker Al Moin, director of the legal and media wing of the Rapid Action Battalion.

Ratan was arrested twice – for a robbery at Thikana Paribahan in 2018 and in 2020 for raiding an autorickshaw – and was in jail for about two and half years, Moin said at the press briefing yesterday.

He came out on bail nine months ago and got straight to planning his next robbery.

His last robbery on August 2, which was planned three days previously, saw the gang rape of a female passenger in a moving bus.

Ratan and his nine accomplices are now in police custody in connection with the event.

The nine other arrestees are: Alauddin, 24; Sohag Mondal, 20; Khandaker Hasmat Ali alias Dipu, 23; Babu Hossain alias Julhas, 21; Md Jibon, 21; Abdul Mannan, 22; Nayeem Sarker, 19; Rasel Talukder, 32; and Aslam Talukder Raihan, 18.

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River erosion eating away riverbanks at the Sara and Rooppur points of the Padma, where the Hardinge Bridge, the oldest rail bridge in the country, stands. Railway officials claimed the erosion is unlikely to harm the bridge but they are observing the situation. The photo was taken near the bridge's girder-2 in Pabna's Pakshey upazila recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

BIBIYANA GAS FIELD Overreliance threatening energy security

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The Bibiyana gas field is shouldering a major burden of gas supply even though there are 19 other gas-producing fields – posing serious threat to Bangladesh's energy security in the coming days.

Subsequently, Bibiyana is producing more than its daily capacity.

Bibiyana's capacity is 1,200 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) of gas. Yesterday, it produced 1,227 mmcf of gas, while the other 19 fields produced a total of 1,117 mmcf, which is 47 percent of the local supply and lower than their earlier production.

"The Bibiyana gas field's capacity will contract in three to four years but we have no alternate plan for that situation – the country could be in trouble then if no new gas reserves are found in that time," said Badrul Imam, honorary professor of the University of Dhaka's geology department.

Amid the backdrop, Bangladesh will observe the National Energy Security Day today with the theme "A Multipurpose Energy – Prosperous Future".

"I hope this day will inspire us to ensure energy security by preventing wastage of energy and

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Hitler's watch sells for \$1.1m

AP, Chesapeake City



A Maryland auction house has sold a wristwatch that once belonged to Adolf Hitler for \$1.1 million.

Alexander Historical Auctions in Chesapeake City, Maryland, US had estimated the value between \$2 and \$4 million, describing the watch as a "World War II relic of

historic proportions."

Newsoutlets report that Jewish leaders and others objected to the sale this week, saying it had little to no historical value.

The auction house's president, Bill Panagopoulos, defended the auction and said the buyer is a European Jew.

The watch features the initials AH and a swastika. The auction house said a French soldier seized the watch as spoils of war on May 4, 1945, when his unit became the first Allied force to arrive at Hitler's Berchtesgaden retreat.

The Nazi leader died in Berlin on April 30, 1945.

Rabbi Menachem Margolin, chairman of the European Jewish Association, wrote in the open letter that the transaction gave "succour to those who idealise what the Nazi party stood for."

"Whilst it is obvious that the lessons of history need to be learned - and legitimate Nazi artefacts do belong in museums or places of higher learning - the items that you are selling clearly do not," he wrote.

Teen gang-raped twice in one day

2 sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Two people were sent to jail yesterday, while police are looking for five others, on charges of raping a 16-year-old girl in Panchagarh's Atwary upazila on Saturday.

The victim was raped twice on the same day – first by two, one of whom was sent to jail, and later by five others, including another jailed accused.

The victim's father filed a case accusing seven people, including Md Raju, 19, of Malgoba village, and Saiful Islam, 48, of Puratan Atwary village, who were arrested on Sunday night, Sohel Rana, officer-in-charge of Atwary Police Station, told The Daily Star.

The two were produced before a court, which sent them to jail yesterday afternoon, he added.

According to the case statement, the victim was in a romantic relationship with Hasan, 25. She came to Panchagarh town on Saturday to meet him.

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