

Prothom Alo an objective voice of the masses

Simeen Rahman tells the daily’s 24th anniversary event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prothom Alo has been an objective voice of the people of Bangladesh for the past 24 years, said Simeen Rahman, chief executive officer of the daily’s publishing company Mediastar Limited and Transcom Group.

“Prothom Alo has been unwavering in its efforts to bring out the truth. And for this, it has gained the trust of the readers. It will continue to do so. And its message will remain the same; that message is of enlightenment, of an enlightened Bangladesh, and the triumph of Bangladesh and its people,” she told a reception to mark the daily’s 24th founding anniversary yesterday.

Ministers, intellectuals, politicians, educationists, businesspeople, diplomats, government officials, cultural and sports personalities, journalists and other dignitaries attended the event held at a city hotel.

Prothom Alo Editor Matuir Rahman delivered the welcome speech at the programme.

In his speech, he said accurate information strengthens democracy and thus helps the country move forward and ensures people’s victory.

“Prothom Alo always tells the truth. The media all over the world are now fighting to earn the freedom to reveal the truth. This is indeed the time for journalism, and Prothom Alo will remain determined to speak the truth,” the veteran editor said.

At the event, Sohrab Hassan, joint editor of the newspaper, got the “Latifur Rahman Award”, which was introduced last year in memory of late Latifur Rahman, chairman of Mediastar Limited and Transcom Group.

Simeen Rahman handed a crest, a certificate, and a cheque to Sohrab Hassan.

Solemnly remembering Latifur Rahman, Simeen said her father used to eagerly wait for Prothom Alo’s founding anniversary programme every year. He had a different kind of love for Prothom Alo, and that love stemmed from emotions and patriotism, she said.

A documentary on the SAFF Women’s Championship Bangladesh Women Football Team was screened at the event.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

The national women’s football team poses for a photo with dignitaries at an event celebrating Prothom Alo’s founding anniversary at Radisson hotel yesterday. A total of Tk 1.5 crore was donated for women’s football at the ceremony.

West on way to ‘joint victory’

Says Ukraine after Russia retreats from Kherson; UN, Moscow grain, fertiliser exports talks end without breakthrough

AGENCIES

Kyiv said yesterday that the West was on its way to “joint victory” over Moscow after Ukraine said it had wrested back Kherson, the first major urban hub to fall after Russia’s invasion on February 24.

London meanwhile said Russia’s “strategic failure” in the strategic Black Sea port city would sow doubt among the Russian public about the point of the war in Ukraine.

“There were very few who believed that Ukraine would survive,” Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said as he met US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on the sidelines of a Southeast Asian summit in Cambodia.

“This is coming, and our victory will be our joint victory — a victory of all peace-loving nations across the world.”

Blinken hailed the “remarkable courage” of Ukraine’s military and people and vowed that US support “will continue for as long as it takes” to defeat Russia.

The humiliating Russian retreat was a huge boost to Ukrainians after months of suffering.

The secretary of Ukraine’s National Security and Defence Council, Oleksiy Danilov, said the liberation of all annexed

territories was just a matter of time.

“We are not going to put anything on ice,” he said. “We are not a freezer.”

The Ukrainian national anthem rang out in Kherson’s central square as a small crowd sang along while huddled around a bonfire, a video published by Ukraine’s parliament on social media showed.

“Special units are already in the city,”

“It’s a big moment and it’s due to the incredible tenacity and skill of the Ukrainians...”

— US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan

President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote on Telegram, posting footage in which Ukrainian troops appeared to gather with residents.

About 50 kilometres (30 miles) from Kherson, Andriy Zholob, a commander of a medical unit, said they had been greeted by smiling faces and given “embroidered towels which we display on our vehicles”.

“We see children running to meet us and greeting us,” Zholob told AFP.

In the nearby region of Mykolaiv, which Russian forces have failed to capture

despite months of attacks, governor Vitaliy Kim said the entire region apart from the Kinburn Spit in the south had been returned to Ukrainian control.

The US hailed Ukraine’s “extraordinary victory” in recapturing Kherson from the Russians yesterday.

“It’s a big moment and it’s due to the incredible tenacity and skill of the Ukrainians, backed by the relentless and united support of the United States and our allies,” US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said.

British Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said yesterday that Kherson could prompt ordinary Russians to question the war.

Meanwhile, United Nations chiefs held talks with Russian officials Friday on the Black Sea agreements on exporting grain and fertilisers, eight days before one of the deals is set to expire.

The discussions took place behind closed doors at the UN Palais des Nations headquarters in Geneva and wrapped up mid-afternoon without breakthrough.

“The discussions updated on progress made in facilitating the unimpeded export of food and fertilisers, including ammonia, originating from the Russian Federation to global markets,” said a UN statement.

BGB seizes crystal meth, yaba worth Tk 11.46cr

UNB, Dhaka

Border Guard Bangladesh seized drugs worth around Tk 11.46 crore from Cox’s Bazar’s Teknaf upazila on Friday.

“After a tip off, a BGB patrol team intercepted a boat carrying a suspected smuggler on the Naf river around 6:50pm while he was heading towards Beribadh area,” said Lt Col Sheikh Khalid Md Iftekhar, commander of BGB 2 Battalion.

The smuggler managed to escape, but the BGB team was able to recover a bag containing 2.11kg of crystal meth and 30,000 yaba pills, he added.

Tourism ban in Bandarban extended till Nov 16

UNB, Bandarban

Bandarban district administration once again extended the temporary ban on tourism in Ruma, Rowangchhari, and Thanchi upazilas till November 16 due to security concerns.

A notice was issued from the Bandarban Deputy Commissioner’s office on Saturday in this regard, following a letter from Bandarban Cantonment.

This is the sixth such restriction imposed for the safety of tourists after law enforcement agencies initiated a joint drive on October 10 against the extremists and criminals hiding in the district’s remote forested areas.

Both local and foreign tourists were banned from visiting Ruma and Rowangchhari on October 18.

The authorities on October 23 banned tourists in Thanchi and Alikadam upazilas for the same reason.

Alikadam was opened to tourists on November 8, while the ban on the other three upazilas was extended till November 16.

5-yr-old hacked to death by uncle

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A five-year-old boy was hacked to death allegedly by his uncle in Mymensingh’s Ishwarganj upazila yesterday.

Nayem Islam, son of Nurul Islam, was killed by his uncle Abdul Barek, said Sheikh Mustasinur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Ishwarganj Police Station, quoting the victim’s family members.

According to the family members, Abdul has been mentally ill for almost a decade and had to be chained. He fled his home around three months ago and has remained missing ever since, they added.

“Abdul entered the house around 12:30pm yesterday, found Nayem alone, and attacked him with a sharp object. Nayem died the spot,” the OC said.

Later, the family members handed Abdul over to police.

At least 19 killed in Egyptian minibus crash

AFP, Cairo

At least 19 people were killed and six injured yesterday when the minibus they were travelling in overturned in northern Egypt’s Nile Delta, the health ministry said.

The minibus tumbled into a canal in Dakahlia province, the ministry said.

Step down now, form caretaker govt

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As police at Rajbari intersection restricted the flow of traffic towards the venue from the morning till around 2:00pm, large groups of supporters had to walk for two kilometres to join the event.

Despite the 38-hour bus strike that began on Friday morning, thousands of supporters made it from Faridpur, Rajbari, Shariatpur, Madaripur and Gopalganj. Many spent two to three nights under the open sky at the venue.

But with the day progressing and the sun beating down on them, the crowd started getting thinner about an hour before the rally.

Besides, crowd fights erupted twice during the rally. But it could not be known which groups started them because the activists were very tight-lipped about the matter.

BNP leaders alleged that law enforcers stopped many of the activists from entering the town for the rally.

In his speech, Fakhruhl thanked the people for making the rally a success: “You did it to restore democracy and people’s voting and other rights. The government destroyed politics,

economy and the country as a whole just to cling to power by force. People are waking up to claim their rights.”

Referring to AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader’s recent remarks that the AL will give democracy an institutional shape, he said, “Could you tell us what your definition of democracy is? ... You’re talking about giving it an institutional shape after obliterating it and snatching people’s rights.”

The government keeps BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia under house arrest out of fear. “But they freed casino kingpin Samrat who joined the Jubo League rally at Suhrawardy Udyan [on Friday].”

Arresting BNP leaders and activists in false cases is part of an old game, he said. “You want to stay in power by any means, but that won’t happen this time.”

Saying “this anarchy” should end, he added, “We want to give independence back to the judiciary and administration and stop corruption.”

BNP Standing Committee Member Mirza Abbas said that through this massive gathering, the people of

Faridpur gave the government a “fitting reply to its misuse and failure to control the prices of essentials”.

He said the suspension of the mobile internet was a sign that the government was scared, and added that the government allowed laundering of money out of the country.

Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, another standing committee member, said the people of Faridpur sent the message that they would lead the anti-government movement in the coming days.

He added that the ruling AL had started holding programmes all of a sudden just to counter the BNP’s events.

The ruling party brought people by hiring buses and offering them money and food, he said.

BNP leader Tabith Awal urged the youth to come forward and join the movement.

The party is holding rallies protesting the rising prices of essentials and fuel and demanding the release of Khaleda Zia.

Faridpur BNP Convener AFM Kaium Jongi chaired the rally.

US Senate

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on Tuesday that he is running for president,” Miller told former Trump aide Steve Bannon on his popular “War Room” podcast.

Trump’s big announcement in Florida will come after a disappointing run for several candidates he backed in the midterms, although more than 100 Republican candidates who challenged the 2020 presidential results still won their respective races.

Some of his hand-picked favorites, however, lost key Republican-held seats to Democrats.

In Pennsylvania, Democrats flipped a US Senate seat with constant attacks on Trump-endorsed celebrity doctor Mehmet Oz, who had never held public office and lives mostly in New Jersey.

Trump had hoped to ride a Republican “red wave” that would prime him for another presidential run but the party looks headed for a much smaller victory than had been predicted.

Govt didn’t waste

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The government had to purchase the Covid-19 vaccines and coronavirus test kits with the reserves. The vaccines and tests were made available to the masses for free.

“Developed countries did not even administer the Covid-19 vaccines to their citizens free of cost.”

Planes were purchased for state-owned Bangladesh Biman Airlines, she said, adding that rivers were dredged too with the reserves.

The government has also formed an Export Development Fund with reserves to provide low-cost loans to exporters in dollars.

“If we use our own dollars through Sonali Bank, that money remains in our country. Keeping that in mind we have given \$8 billion,” she said, adding that Bangladesh lent \$200 million to Sri Lanka when they were in a deep economic crisis.

BNP is trying to spread propaganda across the country about the depleted reserves, she said.

When BNP was in power, foreign

exchange reserves were only \$2.9 billion. From 2001 to 2008, it increased to \$5 billion only.

“From that position, we were able to raise that to about \$48 billion.”

The prices of food, fuel, edible oil, wheat, lentil and corn have increased around the world. “We are importing those,” she said.

While Bangladesh is a self-reliant country in food production, it has to import rice using the reserves as the paddy fields were badly damaged during the recent flood and cyclone.

“No one has fled with money from the foreign reserves. We are Awami League and we have liabilities to the people as Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman dedicated his entire life to give the masses an improved and beautiful life.”

Regarding the apprehension of food scarcity in the coming days, she requested all to utilise every inch of land for food production to avert any kind of food-related crisis.

England take on Pakistan

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Melbourne Cricket Ground showdown and even see the teams crowned joint champions if unable to complete a match of at least 10 overs per side by the end of the reserve day on Monday.

However, conditions should hold up long enough to deliver a contest between the two nations who played for the 50-overs World Cup 30 years ago at the MCG.

After shaky starts both hit top gear in the semifinals, with Pakistan easing to a seven-wicket win over New Zealand in Sydney and England humiliating India by 10 wickets in Adelaide.

Pakistan, the 2009 champions, have had a charmed tournament since being pushed to the brink of elimination by Zimbabwe, with the Netherlands helping them into the

semifinals by eliminating South Africa.

30 years after Imran Khan’s Pakistan claimed the 1992 World Cup, Babar Azam’s team may feel it is their destiny to deliver trophy.

England, the reigning 50-overs world champions, are looking to win a second global T20 title after their 2010 triumph and to build on the legacy of former captain Eoin Morgan, who transformed the team into a white-ball juggernaut.

Pakistan are likely to be unchanged but England could opt to bring back express paceman Mark Wood and number three batsman Dawid Malan if the pair are fit.

The final has been billed as a battle between Pakistan’s vaunted pace attack and England’s top order, but both sides boast other weapons.

No concrete clue yet

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Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of Rab’s legal and media wing, came up with a similar statement.

“We are examining all the evidence at hand to crack the mystery of Fardin’s death but are yet to come to a conclusion,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The body of Fardin, a third-year student of civil engineering at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, was recovered from the Shitalakkhya river at Banani Ghat in Narayanganj’s Siddhirganj on November 7.

He went missing after he dropped his friend Amatullah Bushra in Rampura on November 4 night.

Some media outlets, citing

anonymous sources in the law enforcement, have run reports that Fardin was killed by drug peddlers at Chonpara.

At yesterday’s briefing, Harun said the DB did not say anything like that and that there are other units of law enforcers involved in the investigation.

Fardin’s family and fellow students claimed he was not addicted to any drug.

Investigators say Fardin’s last cell phone location was traced near a tower at Chonpara. The phone remained active till 2:45am the next day.

It was later recovered from Fardin’s pocket.

Sources involved in the investigation said that a day after

Fardin’s body was recovered, river police found another body of an unidentified man, around 30-year-old, from Narayanganj’s Pagla area.

Unidentified, it was later buried by the police.

Till yesterday, no one contacted the police or hospital morgues regarding the body.

Investigators are now trying to identify the victim and find whether the two deaths have any connection, they said.

Shajahan Ali, sub-inspector of Pagla river police outpost, said the body was fresh and there were three injury marks that may have been from stabs.

“We found it not more than 24 hours since the victim’s death,” he said.