

BDR MUTINY

'It was done to destroy army's morale'

Says Fakhrul; probe, trial centring incident not transparent, says GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the BDR mutiny was part of a long-term conspiracy that aimed to destroy the morale of the country's army.

On the same day, Jatiya Party Chairperson GM Quader said the trial and investigation process of Pilkhana carnage was not transparent; most families of the martyrs believe this as well.

The BNP and JP leaders made the remarks at the capital's Banani army graveyard, after placing floral wreaths at the grave of army officers who died during the BDR carnage.

The nation yesterday mourned the death of 74 people, including 57 army officers, in the incident that occurred on February 25-26 in 2009.

Talking to the media, Fakhrul said the BDR mutiny was a serious conspiracy that was against the country.

Claiming that around 7,000 jawans of then BDR (now Border Guard Bangladesh) are innocent, Fakhrul said, hearing of their cases is yet to be completed.

"They have been spending their lives in inhumane prison conditions for 13 to 14 years. Their families and

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Mobile courts to stop flying of kites, lanterns near tracks
Mulls metro rail authority



TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The metro rail authority is considering carrying out mobile court drives to stop the flying of kites or sky lanterns near the metro rail tracks, as they failed to find out any technical solution in this regard.

Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL) -- the operating agency of metro rail -- is taking the hard approach as the metro rail operations are getting frequently disrupted with kites or sky lanterns getting stuck at electric lines.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on December 28 inaugurated the country's first-ever metro rail line, which was opened to the public on the following day.

However, the authorities had to suspend operations for two hours "on safety grounds" on January 1 as a huge number of extinguished sky lanterns fell on the overhead electricity lines after the new year celebrations.

On February 20, DMTCL issued a circular urging people to avoid flying kites or sky lanterns within at least a one-kilometre radius of the metro rail line, after the operation of metro rail was halted for two consecutive days.

The authority said metro rail is operating between Uttara and Agargaon using high-powered electric lines and kites, sky lanterns or gas balloons can result in severe accidents or suffering of the passengers due to the delay.

Yesterday, the authorities had to suspend the metro rail's operation for around 22 minutes after a kite got stuck in the overhead electric line.

Contacted, MAN Siddique, managing director of DMTCL, said they have been requesting people using loudspeakers not to fly kites or sky lanterns near metro tracks but to no avail.

"We are planning to carry out mobile court drives if the situation does not improve. However, the number of such incidents is decreasing," he added.

Siddique also mentioned that this problem has no technical solution.

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**Gonotonto
Moncho
protests
'wrongful'
arrests**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonotonto Moncho, a recently formed alliance of seven political parties, strongly condemned the arrests of District People's Rights Council leaders in Khulna and Bagerhat yesterday.

They claimed that police have arrested the activists

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**PRAYER
TIMING**
FEBRUARY 26

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-15 12-45 4-30 6-05 7-30
JAMAT 5-50 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



To illustrate how plastic waste, like wrappers and bottles, pollute waterbodies, participants of "Climate Expo-2023" prepared this exhibit. Though this display, they have highlighted the need to promote sustainable products to protect the environment. This photo was taken yesterday at the capital's Gulshan Society Lake Park.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

DSA: a weapon to create culture of fear

Speakers tell memorial meeting on writer Mushtaq Ahmed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Digital Security Act (DSA) 2018 has been making the lives of citizens even more unsafe, said speakers at a memorial meeting yesterday.

They also said the government has created a culture of fear to maintain its illegal power and DSA is one of its weapons. In light of the upcoming election, the government is in the process of making some more dangerous laws, namely the Data Protection Act and the Digital Business Act.

Speakers urged the citizens to create a larger movement to abolish all the laws that are repressive and opposed to the interest of the people, including the Digital Security Act.

To commemorate the second death anniversary of the writer Mushtaq Ahmed, who was arrested in a case filed under the DSA and later died in jail in 2021, the meeting was held at Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital in the capital's Dhanmondi.

Speakers also urged the government to compensate all the victims of the DSA, bring the accomplices of false cases to justice and make the absolute power of the government accountable for making such laws.

Environmentalist Syeda Rezwanah Hasan said the weapons of the authoritarian or autocratic government are the repressive laws that they use to silence the protesting people so that the actual criminals can carry out activities like illegal sand

mining, hill cutting, deforestation, and other destructive activities without any hindrance.

"These laws not only violate the rights of the affected people but also trample on their fundamental rights, causing immense suffering to them and their families," she said.

Prof Asif Nazrul of Dhaka University's law department described DSA as the most heinous law in the country's history, calling for its abolishment, compensation for the affected people and the prosecution of the false accusers.

Addressing those citizens who are not yet vocal on the issue, photographer and social activist Shahidul Alam said they have to be questioned for their silence.

Ganasanghati Andolan Coordinator Jonaid Saki said the mere abolishment of such laws will not be enough, rather, the system needs to be changed to ensure the rights of the people.

Mahmudur Rahman Manna, president of Nagorik Oikko; journalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol; Shushashonar Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar; and Didarul Islam Bhuiyan, economic affairs coordinator of the Rastra Sangskar Andolan; spoke at the event, among others.

The meeting was moderated by architect Golam Mahfuz Joardar, who was also tortured in police custody after being arrested under a DSA case.



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Tk 25,000 minimum wage for RMG workers
Speakers demand at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garment workers have demanded the immediate formation of a wage board and minimum wage of Tk 25,000, considering the increased price of daily commodities and rising living costs.

The demand was made at a roundtable organised by Garment Workers Trade Union Centre held at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

While addressing the programme, renowned economist Prof Anu Muhammad criticised the government's use of the term "adjustment" while hiking prices, which he claims was imported from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

"How can they survive with Tk 8,000? Can a four-member family live off this amount? What about their education, treatment, and other living expenses?" questioned the economist.

Comparing the wages of RMG workers in Bangladesh with other less-developed countries, Muhammad pointed out that Bangladeshi RMG workers receive the lowest wages.

He also stressed the importance of arranging food rationing facilities for RMG workers who are in need of such support.

Mahbubur Rahman Ismail, president of Bangladesh Textile

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CLIMATE CHANGE
Youngsters unite for solution-based adaptation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Youths coming from different parts of the country were at the centre of a day-long expo yesterday that aimed to promote sustainable products and services as well as encourage innovations for climate change adaptation.

They came up with various environment-friendly products and shared their views in interactive sessions on how people can work both in rural and urban areas to bring changes in others' lives to mitigate climate change impacts.

The Earth Society with support from Climate Parliament Bangladesh, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Movers, and RR-Imperial Electricals Limited organised the "Climate Expo-2023" at Gulshan Society Lake Park in the capital.

The event was held to find how Sustainable Development Goal 13: "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts" can be achieved.

Mikal Hossain Khan, founder of Projolito Narail, said his organisation has been campaigning in remote areas of Narail district to inspire local farmers to use more organic fertilisers to grow their crops.

"These farmers are little aware about health hazard and risk to the environment that mineral fertiliser may pose," he said.

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The unfulfilled dreams of an artist
Sculptor Shamim Sikder unwell, unable to finish incomplete projects

DU CORRESPONDENT



Ekushey Padak awardee sculptor and former professor of Dhaka University Shamim Sikder has been unwell for three months. She came to Bangladesh six months ago from London, aiming to complete her unfulfilled work.

However, all she gained was disappointment due to multiple barriers on the path to her dreams.

The 70-year-old artist is suffering from multiple illnesses, including cardiovascular, respiratory and kidney complications, according to Imran Hossain, a curator of Shamim Sikder Sculpture Park.

Shamim Sikder arranged a press conference yesterday at Fuller Road to share her unspoken dreams of finishing her incomplete projects.

She is currently undergoing treatment at Dhaka United Hospital, after being shifted from two hospitals previously due to no improvement in her health.

Imran, read the written statement at a conference on behalf of her.

"Her dreams remain incomplete. She dreamt reconstructing the sculpture of Zainul Abedin at DU's Faculty of Fine Arts, and urged the university authorities to unveil it after the reconstruction," said Imran.

Imran also mentioned that Shamim had plans to reconstruct the Guernica sculpture at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, she could not proceed with the plan due to the alleged non-cooperation from the ministry.

Shamim Sikder, who was a professor of the sculpture department of DU's Faculty of Fine Arts, built the "Shoparjito Shadhinota" at DU's TSC in 1990 and Swadhinata Sangram at the university's Fuller Road area. Earlier, in 1974, she built a sculpture in Dhaka Central Jail to commemorate Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.



President Abdul Hamid handing over gold medals to the graduates during the sixth convocation of Jahangirnagar University yesterday.

Sixth JU convocation held

JU CORRESPONDENT

The sixth convocation of Jahangirnagar University was held yesterday.

On the occasion, the university campus was decorated with colourful banners, festoons and arches.

President Abdul Hamid, also chancellor of the university, inaugurated the programme around 3:30pm, held at the central playground of JU.

Chief Justice Hasan Foz Siddique addressed the ceremony as the convocation speaker.

Earlier, a press release from university authorities said around 15,500 students would participate in the convocation while 16 graduates would be given gold medals.