

SWADHINATA MUSEUM

A journey through Bangladesh’s struggle for independence

DIPAN NANDY and ARAFAT RAHMAN

The word “Swadhinata” evokes a powerful image of Bangladesh's journey to independence, and the Swadhinata Museum, located at Dhaka’s Suhrawardy Udyan is a testament to that journey, embodying the spirit of freedom.

Upon entering the museum, one will be led underground through a sloping ramp that gives the impression of entering a deep tunnel. The atmosphere makes visitors feel like they’re on a journey through time.

The first thing one will see is a photograph of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivering his historic March 7 speech, setting the tone for the rest of the museum.

The museum takes one on a journey through the struggles and triumphs of the Bangladeshi people, from the pre-liberation era to the victory of December 16, 1971.

Besides, one will also learn about the ancient Pundra Kingdom and the ruins of Wari-Bateshwar, the Indigo Revolt, the Santal Rebellion, the Sepoy Revolt, the Partition of Bengal, and India's independence in this place.

The museum is divided into three sections, each containing over 300 historic photographs in 144 glass panels, along with numerous information plates.

The first part covers the origin of the Bangla language, the origin of Bangla, and the independence movement, ending with the portrait of Bangabandhu.

The second part depicts the brutality, torture, and massacre of the Pakistani occupation forces with some

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Inside the Swadhinata Museum, visitors are greeted with a striking photograph of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivering his iconic March 7 speech. The museum features over 300 historic photographs arranged in 144 glass panels, taking visitors on a journey from the pre-liberation era to the ultimate victory of the Bangladeshi people during 1971. This picture was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

BIWTA officials ‘attacked’ during drive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Miscreants threw bricks at Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) officials while they were demolishing an illegal establishment of Metro Courier Express Limited on the Turag River in Dhaka’s Mirpur area yesterday.

During the demolition of the illegally constructed warehouse, which started at noon, miscreants threw bricks, prompting BIWTA officials to stop their operation and leave the spot immediately.

Before the demolition drive, the BIWTA chairman and his team had identified the illegal installation during a boat inspection of the Turag River. However, a conflict arose between BIWTA officials and miscreants during discussions about the illegal installation.

Deputy Director of BIWTA Mustafizur Rahman said miscreants threw bricks during the

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Community policing crucial to address extremism

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Engaging community and beat policing to combat extremism and terrorism is essential as it can address the root cause quickly and eliminate threats, said top police officials and foreign diplomats at a seminar yesterday.

They stated that Bangladesh’s strategic location is crucial for regional peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region, and Canada has been actively involved in partnering with the country.

The Anti-Terrorism Unit of the Police and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime jointly organised the project inception programme at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel yesterday, for community and beat policing to counter violent extremism and terrorism. The project is being carried out in partnership with the Canadian government.

Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun said Bangladesh Police have adopted a multi-dimensional approach that focuses on both law enforcement and community engagement with aims to prevent radicalisation and recruitment of young people into violent extremist groups, disrupt terrorist plots, and support the rehabilitation and reintegration of those who have been involved in violent activities.

Involving beat and community policing in countering terrorism will add a new dimension to our fight against the menace, he said.

Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Lilly Nicholls highlighted the shared values of democracy, secularism and free trade between Bangladesh and Canada, as well as their shared commitment to peacekeeping.

She emphasised that the project demonstrates the continuation of the

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PRAYER TIMING						
MARCH 26						
	Fajr	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						
SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING						
RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR			
3	26		6:15			
4	27	4:35	6:16			
5	28	4:34	6:16			

NATIONAL GENOCIDE DAY

‘Recognise genocide in Bangladesh in 1971’

Demand cabinet members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two cabinet members yesterday said friendly countries should play a pioneering role so that Bangladesh can get recognition for the genocide committed by Pakistan during Bangladesh’s Liberation War in 1971.

Addressing a programme marking National Genocide Day, they said some of these friendly countries, who even opposed Bangladesh during the Liberation War, should also play a similar role in this regard.

The Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Liberation War Museum arranged a discussion at the office of the Liberation War Museum.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam said due to political and other reasons, many countries supported Pakistan during Bangladesh’s Liberation War. Now, these countries strongly push many other countries to establish democracy and rule of law.

“These countries talk about many internal matters of Bangladesh whether we want it or not. But now we will look for what they are saying for the recognition of the genocide in

Bangladesh in 1971. They termed the ongoing events of Myanmar as genocide...”

“We urge them to play a pioneering role so that the genocide in Bangladesh gets international recognition,” the state minister said.

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq said good

US government and the UK were against Bangladesh, citizens of these countries were in favour of Bangladesh during the Liberation War.

Both cabinet members said the government will continue its diplomatic efforts to earn recognition of the genocide in Bangladesh.

These countries [the US and the UK] talk about many internal matters of Bangladesh whether we want it or not. But now we will look for what they are saying for the recognition of the genocide in Bangladesh in 1971. They termed the ongoing events of Myanmar as genocide. We urge them to play a pioneering role so that the genocide in Bangladesh gets international recognition.

SHAHRIAR ALAM  
State Minister for Foreign Affairs

senses need to prevail among the world's leading countries about recognising the genocide of Bangladesh.

“They have recognised the genocide in Myanmar. But they don’t recognise the genocide Bangladesh went through,” he said.

He added that although the

President of Asia Justice and Rights Patrick Burgess, also an international human rights expert, in his key presentation emphasised the need for forming an official truth and reconciliation commission on the Bangladesh genocide.

He said Bangladesh needed to be creative in sharing the story,

and facts of genocide with the rest of the world.

“I find that people know very little about the Bangladesh genocide and they become interested when the facts surrounding it are presented to them.”

“We can use theatre, artwork and more to keep the memory of what happened in Bangladesh in 1971 alive and share it with the rest of the world,” he added.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Liberation War Affairs Ministry Chairman Shahjahan Khan, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen, and Liberation War Museum Trustee Mohidul Hoque, among others, spoke at the event.

The country observed genocide day yesterday, commemorating the tragic night when the Pakistan army attacked the unarmed people of Bangladesh in 1971.

The Pakistani army initiated a crackdown on unarmed citizens on the night of March 25.

Between March 25 and December 16 when Bangladesh achieved independence, the occupation army killed 30 lakh people, raped over 2 lakh women, and forced over 10 million people to take refuge in India.

UN expert, int’l orgs condemn attack on journo’s brother

STAR REPORT

A UN expert on human rights defenders and different international organisations have condemned the attack on UK based Bangladeshi journalist Zulkarnain Saer Khan Sami’s brother and demanded a fair probe.

In a tweet on Friday night, Mary Lawlor, UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, said she was very concerned to hear reports of an assault in Dhaka on Mahinur Khan, Zulkarnain’s brother.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said Bangladesh authorities must conduct an immediate and impartial investigation into the attack on Zulkarnain’s brother Mahinur and ensure his family’s safety in a statement yesterday.

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54 BNP leaders, activists arrested as per law: IGP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun yesterday said the recent arrests of 54 BNP leaders and activists from a city club were per the law.

Asked whether dining at a club is a crime and what kind of “anti-state” and “subversive activities” they were planning there, the IGP said a case was filed in this regard and the FIR mentions the charges slapped on them.

“Further investigation will bring out more,” he said while replying to questions from journalists after a programme at Pan Pacific Sonargaon hotel in Dhaka.

When the IGP was questioned why the arrests were made without any warrants and whether it

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RAMADAN IN DU DORMS

Iftar away from home

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

For many residential university students, Ramadan entails staying miles away from home and missing out on homemade dishes. But residential students of Dhaka University have found solace in their “second home” at the campus dorms.

For them, having iftar together has become a cherished ritual, where they come together in small or large groups, either in their dorm rooms, the canteen or on the green fields under the open sky.

The festive ambience is enhanced by the aroma of piyaju, beguni, jilapi, and other delicious iftar delicacies. However, the students could not help but miss their family members and reminisced about past Ramadan celebrations spent with them.

Shohidul Shaan, a residential student of Shaheed Sergeant Zahurul Haque Hall, said, “Yes, we miss having iftar at home, surrounded by our loved ones. But the campus is our second home. When the dorms were closed during the pandemic, we realised how much we missed hall life. We are like one giant family here, composed of seniors and juniors.”

Before iftar, the students collect money from each other and buy food from hall canteens. Some even go to the extent of bringing traditional iftar items from Old Dhaka to share with their peers.

Hundreds of makeshift shops have been set up near the DU residential halls, taking the shape of large iftar bazaars, the ones we see across the capital during this month. Staffers of hall canteens become part-time

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Residential students of Dhaka University gather to buy iftar items from makeshift shops near their halls, creating a festive atmosphere. This photo was taken from the Bijoy Ekattor Hall area yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN