



A butterfly relishes nectar from a flower. Skipping from flower to flower, these winged insects collect nectar, aiding pollination for new flowers to bloom. The photo was taken in Doulatpur Rail Station area, Khulna.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Uphold ideals of Liberation War

Chief justice urges journos; 3 get Bazlur Rahman Smrity Padak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan yesterday called upon journalists to adhere to the principles of those who sacrificed their lives during the 1971 Liberation War in their professional work.

Speaking as the chief guest at an award ceremony, he commemorated journalists such as Shahidullah Kayser, Shaheed Saber, Sirajuddin Hossain, and Selina Parvin, who laid down their lives for the country's independence.

Highlighting the contribution of the Liberation War Museum, Hassan praised the institution's efforts to educate future generations.

He said without such institutions, many aspects of the Liberation War would have been lost.

He urged the audience, especially the public representatives present, to establish research centres at the grassroots to spread the spirit of the Liberation War.

The Liberation War Museum organised the event to present the Bazlur Rahman Smrity Padak-2023 awards for journalism.

Ahmad Istiak, a reporter from The Daily Star, and Jharna Moni, deputy chief reporter of the Bhorer Kagoj, jointly received the award in the print media category.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



PHOTO: STAR

The awardees with the dignitaries at the event yesterday.

Govt 'sheltering the corrupt'

Alleges BNP leader Farroque

UNB, Dhaka

The Awami League government is providing shelter to numerous corrupt individuals like Aziz Ahmed and Benazir Ahmed, alleged BNP chairperson's advisory council member Zainul Abedin Farroque yesterday.

"Where is Benazir [former police chief Benazir Ahmed], Aziz [former army chief Aziz Ahmed], Matiur [revenue officer Matiur Rahman] today?" he questioned.

Speaking at a demonstration, the BNP leader said new corrupt individuals like National Board of Revenue first secretary [Taxes Legal and Enforcement] Quazi Abu Mahmud Faisal have emerged.

"In Bangladesh, there are numerous individuals thriving under the shelter of the government, who have amassed crores of taka by plundering. These people must be exposed, or the people of Bangladesh will never forgive you [government]," the BNP leader said.

Farroque, a former opposition chief whip in parliament, criticised the AL general secretary for his political rhetoric supporting the government amid increasing allegations of corruption against government officials. "The people are very conscious. You're in power with the support of a few bureaucrats. You have not been able to win over the people," he claimed.

Projonmo Bangladesh, a pro-opposition platform, organised the programme in front of Jatiya Press Club, protesting the government's agreement with India.

The BNP leader strongly opposed the Indian government's plan to develop a network of railway tracks through Bangladesh to connect the northeast region with the rest of India.



Vendors take up almost the entire footpath in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, leaving little to no room for patients and pedestrians to walk. The photo was taken yesterday.

'Take action to prevent child marriage'

UN under-secy-general urges to invest in girls' education

PORIMOL PALMA

Child marriage in Bangladesh is deeply troubling, and effective and immediate action is required to put an end to it, said UN Under-Secretary-General Dr Natalia Kanem.

"We have seen girls aged just 12 who are pregnant. This is deeply worrying, and society needs to realise it and take action in this regard," said Dr Kanem, who is also executive director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

She was in Dhaka recently for a two-day global dialogue on demographic diversity and sustainable development, marking the 30th anniversary of 1994's landmark International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo.

In an interview with The Daily Star, she spoke on the progress made since the ICPD in Cairo and the challenges and ways out in the days to come.

She said ICPD put women and girls at the centre of development, and there has been remarkable progress in women's development, alongside their sexual and reproductive health.

"For example, maternal mortality fell by one-third. In Bangladesh, it fell by 38 percent. There



The dividend comes when you invest in girls' education. This will ultimately lead to multiple benefits in health, productivity, and income.

NATALIA KANEM

were many policies and laws enacted, like the Prevention of Oppression Against Women and Children Act 2000 in Bangladesh," Kanem said.

However, the ICPD agenda remains largely unfinished, with child marriage being one of them, she added.

According to UN data, 51 percent of girls in Bangladesh are married before their 18th birthday and of them, 15 percent are married before the age of 15. Additionally, at least four percent of boys are married before the age of 18.

"It is very risky to have a pregnancy at such a young age. Teaching them safe sexuality and delaying pregnancy are of critical importance," Dr Kanem said.

When such young women give birth to children, they face health risks, alongside higher risks of gender-based violence, she said.

If the mother is educated, a family enjoys better health and economic conditions, eventually leading to a better-off future generation, while the opposite happens otherwise, she added.

"The dividend comes when you invest in girls' education. This will ultimately lead to multiple benefits in health, productivity, and income," she also said.

Another objective of ICPD was to end maternal and child deaths, but that goal is far from being achieved despite notable progress.

Sharing her experience of visiting facilities at the Santal community in Gaibandha, where UNFPA-trained midwives deliver babies, Dr Kanem said before only three percent of women used to go to the facility but now it has gone up to 20 percent.

"Three midwives delivered 494 children there. The people were so happy," she said, noting that pregnant women visiting such facilities for deliveries and pregnancy-related advice help in a great way.

In general, 33 percent of deliveries take place at homes, which is dangerous. The challenge now is how to decrease it, she said, adding, "Bangladesh has leadership, but massive social awareness is required and media can play a role here."

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK

Road to justice still not over

HC yet to conclude hearings on death references, appeals

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

It is still uncertain when the August 21 grenade attack cases will reach the eventuality although the High Court has so far held hearings on death references and appeals for 91 working days since December 5, 2022.

The cases were filed after the gruesome attacks on an Awami League rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka on August 21, 2004, leaving at least 24 people dead and 300 injured.

The then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, now the prime



An unexploded grenade at the scene.

STAR FILE PHOTO

minister, narrowly escaped death in the incident.

The state counsels (deputy attorney generals and assistant attorney generals) have read out from the paper books, which contain all the details of a case, trial proceedings, statements, evidence, verdicts and other documents of the cases, for 61 days before the HC bench of Justice Shahidul Karim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman.

Then the defence counsels have placed arguments for 30 days till June 12 before the bench on behalf of 24 convicted accused out of total 49.

The HC bench will resume the hearing on June 30, court

sources said.

Once the defence lawyers finish placing arguments, the state counsels will make arguments against the convicted accused and then the defence will give reply to their (state) arguments. Deputy Attorney General Bashir Ahmed told The Daily Star on June 20.

After concluding the hearings, the HC bench will deliver a verdict on the death references, and the appeals, filed by the convicted accused challenging the trial court judgement.

DAG Bashir said after the HC will release the full text of the verdict, both the state

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

A Dhaka court on October 10, 2018 sentenced 19 people, including former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar to death in two cases. Nineteen others including BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman were given life imprisonment.

'Introduce ration for RMG workers'

DU CORRESPONDENT

A rationing system must be introduced for ready-made garment (RMG) workers and low-income people, demanded participants at rallies in Dhaka yesterday.

Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati and the National Garment Workers Federation organised the separate programmes in front of Jatiya Press Club.

The speakers also sought the cancellation of tax exemptions for illegal "wealth earners and money launderers".

They said although the lion's share of remittance comes from the RMG sector, no budget allocation is kept for them, they said.

Low-income people are intimidated when the new budget comes, as taxes on goods increase every year, said the participants.

Taslima Akhter, president of Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati, and Babul Hossain, its general secretary, were among those present.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS