



36 days of
JULY
Saluting the bravehearts

Clockwise from bottom left, people browsing through the photographs at the inauguration of The Daily Star's photo exhibition "36 days of July: Saluting the Bravehearts" yesterday; the audience listening to the speakers at the event; Mosharraf Hossain, father of journalist Hasan Mehedi, who was shot dead by police on July 18, breaks down seeing the photo of his son's body.

PHOTO: STAR

SALUTING THE BRAVEHEARTS

36 days of
JULY

PHOTO EXHIBITION

DECEMBER 1-7, 2024

Time: 10:00 AM-8:00 PM

Venue: The Daily Star Centre

STORYTELLING WEEK

Time: 3:00 PM-4:30 PM

COURAGE AMIDST CRISIS

Stories from volunteers
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1

PEDAGOGY OF PROTEST

University teachers on the
frontlines
MONDAY, DECEMBER 2

WOMAN, LIFE, FREEDOM
Political representation of
women
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3

BLACKOUT CHRONICLES

How journalists, activists
navigated the Blackout
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4

MARGINALISED VOICES OF JULY REVOLUTION

Stories of struggle, sacrifice and
hope from workers
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5

WRITE TO PROTEST

Writers and poets on their
experience
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7



Hills razed

FROM PAGE 1
At Rupshi Hill of West Khulshi, walls have been built encircling plots.

"The plot owners first construct walls so that they can build buildings dodging the officials of the local administration," said a local, seeking anonymity.

Razing hills without permission from the DoE is punishable with up to two years' imprisonment or a Tk 2 lakh fine under the Environment Conservation Act.

DoE officials said they have filed 34 cases against land owners for cutting hills over the last two years.

Rubaiyat Tahreem Sourav, assistant director of the DoE in Chattogram city, said they were taking action against the lawbreakers almost immediately after receiving complaints.

A CU study revealed that more than 400 port city residents died between 2000 and 2017 in landslides.

Cutting of hills contributes to landslides and waterlogging in the port city, said Mohammad Kamal Hossain, former professor of the Institute of Forestry and Environmental Science at CU.

"We should keep environmental health in mind while taking up development projects. Otherwise, our development initiatives will go in vain," he said.

Md Mohi Uddin, a land owner at Shapla Residential Project in Akbor Shah area, faces a case filed by the DoE over razing hills.

Denying the allegation of cutting hills, he told The Daily Star, "I will fight the legal battle in court."

'Don't ever let an autocrat rule us again'

FROM PAGE 1

Shamsi Ara Zaman, mother of martyred journalist Tahir Zaman Priyo, said, "We are common people. We do not understand power. The parents of martyrs do not want power, and neither do the injured. They only want some empathy. The media need to focus more on them."

Criticising some media outlets for enabling the Awami League rule, she said, "The media that helped Sheikh Hasina become more reckless need to be brought back on track."

She said she did not cry when she heard the news of her son's death. "To earn freedom, someone or the other's son must go. I didn't cry for Priyo, because by then, so many of our children had died."

Sabrina Afroz Sabonti, elder sister of Mahamudur Rahman Saikot, an HSC student from Mohammadpur Government Model College killed on July 19, said, "We cannot betray the blood of the martyrs in this new Bangladesh. After losing my 19-year-old brother, I found strength in knowing that he was not alone in making sacrifices. My brother was shot dead while trying to save his friend."

Demanding justice, she said, "When I see the slogan, 'My brother is in the grave while the killers roam free,' I can't keep it together."

She said it was surreal how someone one eats with, lives with, and grows up with vanishes one day.

Abul Bashar Anik, brother of Mohammed Sajal who was shot on August 5 in Narayanganj's Chashara, shared how his brother died happy knowing that Hasina had fallen.

"When he regained consciousness on the morning of August 6 after a major surgery, my brother, despite his critical condition, asked me, 'Did Sheikh Hasina resign?'"

"I was annoyed and asked why he was thinking about this in such a state. He still insisted. When I informed him that Sheikh Hasina had resigned and fled, he smiled and said, 'Alhamdulillah'."

"That was the last smile I saw on his face. He breathed his last that evening," recalled Anik.

He said the dictator, in a bid to remain in power, opened fire on innocent people, some of whom were in their homes or standing on rooftops. "I demand that those involved in these killings face trial and a Bangladesh free from dictatorship."

Ainun Nahar's daughter Naima

Sultana, 15, a 10th grader of Milestone School and College in Dhaka, was killed.

"I saw her brain spill out of her skull right in front of my eyes," she said, speaking to this correspondent at the event.

"During the movement, she used to draw cartoons and caricatures. She wanted to join the rallies ... I tried to stop her. She wouldn't listen. On the afternoon of July 19, she was drawing a flower. Without finishing it, she went to the balcony to bring in some clothes. At that moment, students, being chased, took shelter below our building. The police shot at her and killed her inside her own home."

Md Abu Sayed, nephew of the martyred Maya Islam, recalled how they were even unable to locate the hospital she was in for a whole day. Maya had been killed when she had stepped outside for a moment to buy her 7-year-old grandson ice cream. Her grandson Musa, who had also been shot, is still in a vegetative state in Singapore.

"We heard she was at Rampura Farazi Hospital, but we couldn't go there. We were already at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital trying to save Musa. The next day, we found her body at the hospital. Even the ambulance carrying her for burial was attacked on the road," said Sayed.

Muhammad Imran Hossain, who lost his sight after sustaining injuries in Uttara, said he does not want to become a burden on his family.

"Everyone is busy pursuing their own political goals. I don't want to be a burden. If proper treatment is provided to the injured, their conditions can improve."

"I live with my aunt after losing my parents in childhood. I couldn't stay idle at home after witnessing the deaths of my brothers. On July 19, I joined the protests. We asked police not to shoot and to let us protest peacefully."

Describing a chaotic scene, he said, "Uttara became a war zone. After a loud bang, I fell unconscious ... An ambulance was arranged, but the police and Chhatra League didn't let it pass. I was finally taken to a hospital. Had they not given me IV saline I would have died."

The exhibition hall at The Daily Star Centre was filled with visitors, each slowly moving from one photo frame to another, examining the news clips and photographs on display.

Among them was Mosharraf

Hossain, father of slain journalist Hasan Mehedi. He walked slowly, paying close attention to each frame as if he was searching for something or perhaps someone.

At 3:38pm, Mosharraf stopped. He looked at the framed photo of his son Mehedi.

Mosharraf's hand trembled as he pointed to the photograph. The photo was of the body of his son on a gurney. The body was riddled with shotgun pellets.

Overcome with emotion, he gently touched the frame as tears streamed down his face.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Fatema Khatun, mother of martyr Md Mamun Hossain, speaking at the event.

Slowly, he reached into his pocket and pulled out a small photograph of Mehedi, holding it up to compare. His voice choked with grief.

"This is my son's photograph ... My son Mehedi."

At the event, student protesters and coordinators urged people to work for national unity.

Masud Rana, a coordinator from Rajshahi University, said, "We need to protect 2024, because if we can't, we will see more bloodshed. We are all in this fight together for communal harmony. When we see people practising restraint, India tries to incite communal unrest in Bangladesh. They are trying to create divisions that are artificial. We respect sovereignty. Our neighbouring country should do the same."

Shyamoli Sultana, a student of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, said, "Before talking about reforming the state, we must first talk about reforming ourselves."

Shyamoli, who played a key role in organising the students of her university, said people must respect the views they oppose because a lack of respect creates divisions.

"It is natural that everyone does not think alike. That does not mean we can disregard or disrespect others' opinions. Because when you fail to respect others' views, opportunities open up for certain groups that neither want the country to prosper nor its people to live in peace. They seek to exploit the nation for their own gain. We cannot allow this to happen."

judiciary can function independently and the administration freely.

"The more we can reform these aspects, the smoother our journey will be from a fascist structure towards a truly democratic state," she added.

Sayma Sultana, a student of BRAC University, said the courage and unity she witnessed in people is something that must be preserved forever.

"The success of our movement was not solely due to the students. Our parents, teachers, rickshaw pullers, shopkeepers - everyone contributed. Without them, this achievement might not have been possible."

Nirab Hasan Shujan, a student of Government Titumir College, said, "Since August 5, we have been entrusted with a great responsibility. We have talked about reforms because there is no liberation without reforms."

The mass uprising of the 1990s failed solely due to the political parties, he added.

"In 2024, the student community has once again united. We will remain steadfast in one goal: We must ensure that no new fascist force arises."

Nusrat Tasnim Orna, a volunteer of Loraku 24, spoke about her experiences in working with the injured.

"We helped them, cared for them, and provided services to 91 injured. Sadly, four of them passed away. We also tried to offer financial support to rehabilitate some of them. Because of that, I can now sleep in peace."

Prof Gitara Nasreen, who teaches journalism at Dhaka University, urged all to remember the spirit of the movement, come what may.

"We must never forget the long July. The events of 2024 gave us the courage to speak out. Once, people didn't even dare to utter the word 'fascist'."

"Even after so much gunfire and violence, people couldn't be removed from the streets. Those who contributed to the July movement must be remembered. They taught us that change is possible. We must preserve that spirit."

After visiting the exhibition, Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam said, "Each picture of the exhibition has its own appeal. Every incident intensely hurts and overwhelms. My heart was heavy, and I felt that so much sacrifice should not go in vain. We must move forward."

Star pays tribute to July heroes

FROM PAGE 1

Family members of the martyrs, wounded protesters, teachers, student coordinators from various universities, active participants in the movement, and other distinguished guests attended the event, featuring scores of photographs, reports and video clips published by The Daily Star during the movement.

After the inauguration, the visitors explored the exhibition, moving through the photographs and news coverage on the ground floor and first floor of The Daily Star Centre.

A documentary titled "Droher July: Shongbade, Shongrame" was screened, where the newspaper's reporters and photographers recalled their experience while covering the July uprising.

Later, a storytelling session was held, where family members of the martyrs; injured individuals; and

student coordinators shared their experiences and expressed their visions for a new Bangladesh.

A dedicated corner was set up for guests to reflect on and share their impressions of the exhibition.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said the newspaper organised this exhibition as part of remembering and paying tribute to the fearless souls who took the "36 days of July" ashore.

The exhibition highlights how The Daily Star reported on this historic uprising, including the editorial policies at the time and the various articles the newspaper ran.

It lays out how the newspaper's journalists and photographers risked their lives to bring the stories of people's sacrifices, courage, and heroism to the readers of the country and across the world.

Shamsi Ara Zaman, mother of martyred journalist Tahir Jaman

Priyo; Md Abu Sayed, nephew of martyred Maya Islam; Sabina Afroz Srabonti, elder sister of martyred Mahmudur Rahman Shoikot; Fatema Khatun, mother of martyred Mamun Hossain; Abul Bashar Anik, brother of martyred Mohammad Sajal; Hanif Dhali, father of injured Antor Dhali; injured Muhammad Imran Hossain; Prof Gitara Nasreen of Dhaka University; and Nusrat Tasnim Orna, a volunteer of Loraku 24, spoke at the event.

Among the student coordinators who spoke were Masud Rana of Rajshahi University; Saima Lubna of BRAC University; Shyamoli Sultana Zaddniy of University of Liberal Arts; Nirab Hasan Sujon of Titumir College; Shahinur Shumi of Eden Mohila College.

Coordinators Naim Abedin of East West University; Moinul Islam of Dhaka College; Farabi Jisan of BRAC University were present.

Simeen Rahman, chief executive officer of Transcom Group; Zaraif Ayaat Hossain, head of Strategy & Transformation of Transcom Group; Romo Rouf Chowdhury, one of the directors of Medialworld Limited; Imran Faiz Rahman, one of the directors of Medialworld Limited; Matiur Rahman, editor and publisher of Prothom Alo; Dewan Hanif Mahmud, founder editor and CEO of Bonik Barta; Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation; lyricist Shahidullah Faraizi; and television and theatre actor Masum Basher were present.

Dhaka University faculty members Professor Tasneem Siraj Mahboob, Associate Professor Moshahida Sultana and Assistant Professor Rushad Faridi; former VC of Begum Rokeya University Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah; Jahangirnagar University Professor Mirza Taslima

Sultana; writer Dr Shafiqul Islam; journalist Kazal Rashid Shahin; constitutional expert Arif Khan; communication expert Khan Md Rabiul Alam; and Associate Professor of Colgate University USA Navine Murshid were also present.

Besides, Baharul Alam, inspector general of police; Mohammad Ruhul Kabir Khan, deputy commissioner of Tejgaon Division Police; and Muttazul Islam, senior assistant superintendent (media wing) of Rapid Action Battalion Headquarters also attended the event.

The exhibition will remain open to the public from December 1-7, from 10:00am to 8:00pm, except Friday.

Additionally, discussions will be held daily from 3:00pm to 4:30pm, where journalists, teachers, garment workers, and people from different walks of life will share their experiences of the movement.