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Martyred Intellectuals' Day observed

BSS, Dhaka

The nation yesterday observed Martyred Intellectuals' Day paying glowing tributes to the intellectuals who were brutally killed by the Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators at the end of the Liberation War in 1971.

Sensing their eventual defeat, the occupation forces and their Bangalee collaborators carried out a systematic massacre to cripple the country's intellectual potential.

National programmes were observed yesterday, honouring the fallen heroes.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus gave separate messages paying profound respect to the memories of the martyred intellectuals.

As per the state programme, the president and the chief adviser placed separate wreaths at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in the morning.



Children, members of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and BNP honoured martyred intellectuals of he 1971 Liberation War. The children honoured the fallen heroes in the Rayerbazar area, while both Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and BNP organised their events in Mirpur marking Martyred Intellectuals Day yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



HEALTH REFORM Priorities primary healthcare: experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Primary healthcare must be placed at the centre of health sector reforms and health insurance should be introduced in a way that it ensures healthcare for all, said policymakers and health professionals at an event yesterday.

Strengthening secondary and emergency healthcare systems is equally critical, they said during a national dialogue titled "Reform Pathways for the Health Sector", organised by the UHC Forum in collaboration with BRAC at the BRAC Centre Auditorium, marking Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day 2024.

Speakers urged the government to grant hospitals financial autonomy to manage resources, including manpower, salaries, and allowances.

Md Saidur Rahman, Secretary of the Health Services Division, highlighted the role of collaboration, saying, "We must recognise the valuable contributions of NGOs and the private sector and support their efforts so we can all work cohesively under a unified framework."

Former Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services Dr Abul Kalam Azad said, "Healthcare in Bangladesh suffers from inequitable access and inadequate service delivery, leaving providers and patients dissatisfied. To address this, UHC must be prioritised."

He also stressed the need for comprehensive reforms across primary, referral, intermediary, and emergency care services to achieve an equitable and accessible healthcare system.

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Indo-Bangla ties should be on mutual respect

Says foreign adviser

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain has emphasised Bangladesh's commitment to fostering cordial relations with India, based on mutual respect and shared interests, akin to its approach with all nations.

"The interim government is working towards this goal," he said during a meeting in Belabo upazila of Narsingdi yesterday.

Touhid underscored the government's primary objective of ensuring a fair and credible election. "Our first task is to restore stability in the country. We aim to organise elections while paving the way for fundamental reforms, ensuring no future government deviates from this path," he said.

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Sweeping reforms must for gender equality

Says Naripokkho

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Naripokkho, one of the country's oldest feminist movements, has called for sweeping reforms to promote gender equality, including a demand that political parties nominate women for one-third of their electoral rolls.

At a press conference titled "Women's Rights and Freedom: Expectations and Actions", held yesterday at Dhaka Reporters Unity, the platform also urged for direct elections to women's reserved seats, replacing the current practice of political parties selecting candidates. "Reserved seats for women must be kept in all 64 districts," they added.

Naripokkho further demanded the reinstatement of the "no-vote" option to allow voters to express a lack of confidence in an election.

The organisation also called for the separation of religion from the state, emphasising the need to make Bangladesh secular and humane.

Other key demands included amendments to the Uniform Family Law, the Inheritance Law, and laws on guardianship, compensation, and citizenship to ensure equal rights for

women in both family and public life.

Naripokkho urged the government to amend labour laws to recognise women's work in informal sectors such as domestic work and street vending. They also insisted that all Birangonas, including those working

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase women's representation in parliament
- Direct polls for reserved seats
- Reinstate "No Vote"
- Ensure secular governance
- Amend family laws
- Recognise informal work

as sex workers, be accorded due respect and state benefits.

The platform called for the full implementation of the National Drug Policy 2016 and an update to the National Health Policy 2011.

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Don't waste second chance to build nation

Says Asif Nazrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The "second chance" to build Bangladesh, earned through the sacrifices of its youth, must not be squandered, law Adviser Asif Nazrul said yesterday.

Speaking at the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in Mirpur, Dhaka, on Martyred Intellectuals' Day, Nazrul told reporters, "The opportunity we have to build the nation, through the sacrifices of our youth, must not be wasted. This is our commitment today."

He reminded the nation that the spirit of the Liberation War, driven by the freedom fighters' love for the country, continued in the July mass uprising. "In July, students fought fearlessly for democracy, people's rights, and a society free from discrimination," Nazrul said.

The adviser also expressed his disappointment over Bangladesh's failure to achieve the dream of a prosperous and just nation. He attributed this failure to a particular mindset and shortcomings in political leadership.

"Despite the sacrifices of many in 1971, we have not realised the dream of a just, prosperous Bangladesh. Let us not allow this failure to repeat," he added.

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A wreath being placed on the coffin of Helal Hafiz to pay him last respect at Jatiya Press Club yesterday. The poet passed away in Dhaka on Friday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Tribute paid to Helal Hafiz

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Best known as the poet of rebellion and love, Helal Hafiz was laid to rest with state honours yesterday at the Martyred Intellectuals Graveyard at Mirpur in Dhaka.

For a man who cherished solitude throughout his life, his final moments were anything but lonely.

State advisers, journalists, poets, writers, and people from all walks of life flocked to honour him one last time, adorning his coffin with flowers and shedding heartfelt tears.

The poet's body was brought to the Bangla Academy premises at 11:00am, where his first namaz-e-janaza took place.

Later in the afternoon, following a second funeral prayer at the National Press Club, his body was taken to the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur, where he was laid to rest.

Among those who paid tribute were Law Adviser Asif Nazrul, Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, and the Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam.

At the Bangla Academy, freedom fighter and Liberation War Affairs Adviser Faruk E Azam (Bir Protik) and Bangla Academy Director General

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DUTA office vandalised

STAR REPORT

Miscreants vandalised Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) office on the university campus on Friday night.

According to DUTA members, a group of 20-30 individuals broke into the Dhaka University Club around 10:00pm.

Entering the club, the assailants forced the peon on duty to unlock the DUTA office door, they said.

Later, they ransacked and vandalised the DUTA office, including the honour board.

They also ruined the floral wreaths in the office commemorating Martyred Intellectuals Day.

Speaking to The Daily Star, DUTA General Secretary Dr Zeenat Huda said the perpetrators hurled expletives and threatened the office staff and peons while entering the club.

"They even threatened the teachers, saying that they would prevent DUTA teachers from organising any programmes. As a result, we could not hold any event marking Martyred Intellectuals Day."

Zeenat, a sociology professor, said, "It is unfortunate that the current DU administration has failed to protect the DUTA office and ensure the security of the teaching community. DUTA represents the entire teaching community, not any specific group, section, or faction."

Asked if any of the assailants were identified, Prof Zeenat replied, "We are still investigating the matter. We have already reported the incident to the DU Club and its concerned officials."

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