

NEWS

Shamsul Hoque Mojumder's death anniversary

CITY DESK

The 17th death anniversary of Shamsul Hoque Mojumder, a retired engineer of PWD and social worker, was observed yesterday, said a press release.

On this occasion, a doa and milad mahfils were held after the Juma prayers at Amjad Mojumder Bari Jame Masjid, Hosne Ara Bulbul Hifzul Quran, Wadarpur Orphanage Mosque, Al-Haj Shamsul Haque Mojumder Jame Masjid, Purba Devpur Patuabari Jame Masjid, Adddar Bari Jame Masjid and Ferdous Nagar Jame Masjid in Amjadhat union of Fulgazi upazila, Feni.

The friends, relatives and well-wishers of Shamsul Hoque Mojumder, father of Zakir Hossain Mojumder, BJMC retired engineer, and Ferdous Alam Mojumder, chairman and managing director of Frontline Communications Limited, are requested to attend the programmes to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Bamboo trade thrives

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rising to about 50 during peak season, from early winter to the start of the monsoon.

Bamboo trader Basit Mia, who has been running his business at the market for the past 35 years, said bamboo is brought in from nearby upazilas such as Srimangal, Kamalganj, and Kulaura.

"Bamboo is sold here daily, but the main haat days are Monday and Friday. On those days, the market sees transactions worth Tk 2-3 lakh, and even up to Tk 5-6 lakh on Fridays," he said.

However, supply has been declining in recent years.

Kalam Mia, another trader, said, "Straight, long, and strong bamboo is getting harder to find. As villages expand and housing increases, land once used to grow bamboo is being repurposed. That's why production and supply are low now."

Despite these challenges, the market remains a key source of quality bamboo.

Sajjad Hosain, a contractor from Sylhet town, said he frequently sources bamboo from Kalarbazar for construction projects.

Mahendra Sarkar, a 60-year-old cane craftsman from Rajapur village, said, "I've been buying bamboo here for 40 years. I use it to make baskets, kula, and khola. I don't know of any bamboo haat as large as this one in our area."



Chickens perch on bamboo poles after their coops were destroyed by the waters from the Padma. Many crops were damaged and some livestock lost to foxes. As the water recedes, villagers are returning to their ravaged homes with whatever poultry they managed to save. The photo was taken in the Madhya Char area of Paba upazila, Rajshahi yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

MAWLANA BHASHANI BRIDGE

Incomplete approach road poses risk for vehicles

S DILIP ROY, *Latmonirhat*

Around three kilometres of the approach road on Kurigram's Chilmari side of the newly built Mawlana Bhashani Bridge remain unfinished, forcing buses and goods-laden trucks to navigate it at risk every day.

Heavy rainfall on August 27 caused two portions of the incomplete road to collapse. Although the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) carried out emergency repairs, the road has yet to be fully carpeted.

The 1,490-metre-long bridge over the Teesta River, connecting Chilmari upazila in Kurigram with Haripur in Gaibandha's Sundarganj upazila, was inaugurated on August 20.

Since then, thousands of light and heavy vehicles have been crossing the bridge daily, improving connectivity between Chilmari, Gaibandha, Dhaka, and other parts of the country.

Chilmari Upazila Engineer Julfikar Ali said, "The incomplete road has made our movement difficult."

Truck driver Jahanul Haque, 50, said,

"The bridge has eased travel from Chilmari to Gaibandha and Dhaka, reducing both time and costs. But driving heavy trucks on the unfinished road is still risky."

Bus driver Mizanur Rahman, 55, echoed him.

According to LGED sources, a total of 57 kilometres of approach roads has been built on both sides of the bridge. Of this,



51.77 kilometres in Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha have been completed, while 5.23 kilometres in Chilmari upazila remain partially unfinished.

Chilmari Upazila Engineer Julfikar Ali said, "Out of 5,230 metres of approach road, carpeting of 2,150 metres has been completed. Another 2,380 metres are

ready for carpeting. But 700 metres have been delayed due to land acquisition complications. Although heavy rainfall caused some damage, we repaired it quickly. At present, there is no major problem for movement."

Executive Engineer of LGED in Gaibandha, Uzzal Chowdhury, said, "We have instructed the contractor to complete the remaining work in Chilmari quickly. The entire approach road will be finished within this year."

The project was implemented by China State Construction Engineering Corporation under LGED, with joint funding from the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) and the Opec Fund for International Development (OFID).

The bridge was built using 290 piles, 30 pillars, 28 spans, and 155 girders. In addition, 12 bridges, 58 box culverts, and 57 kilometres of approach roads with river training works were constructed after acquiring 133 acres of land.

The core bridge structure cost around Tk 367 crore, while approach roads, river training, culverts, and land acquisition required another Tk 363.85 crore.

Umama eyes major

and ensure political coexistence of all views," she said.

She added, "Before August 5, I was involved in numerous movements and student-oriented initiatives, while continuing my studies. I tried to balance academics and activism."

"After August 5, when the country was in crisis, I stepped forward as one of the faces of the July movement -- working on issues from ensuring treatment for the injured to holding the government accountable," said Umama.

Now, according to Umama, she wants to do something concrete for her alma mater.

"I want to continue working on the campus issues I have long been engaged with. Recently, through our science organisation, I arranged a science fest. I have also called for a healthy campus environment and hall politics. Dhaka University has long suffered from partisan politics, and I want to end that," she said.

The former spokesperson of Students Against Discrimination also stressed the lack of female representation in the Ducusu leadership.

"Since independence, no woman has ever been elected VP. Women themselves can best raise their safety concerns and rights on campus. For decades, women led movements, but when it came to securing rights, they were sidelined."

Umama said female

Haunted by scars, still waiting

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demanded an end to the culture of state violence.

"Almost a year has passed, but many remain missing, and there is still no clarity on how trials will take place. It is very frustrating," he said, urging that secret detention centres be preserved as evidence.

These testimonies are among 1,752 complaints now under investigation by the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances.

Human rights groups say the scale of disappearances remains alarming. Odhikar recorded 708 cases between 2009 and June 2024, Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) listed 629 from 2007 to 2023, HRSS counted 392 from 2015 to 2024, Human Rights Watch estimated nearly 600 from 2009 to 2021, while the International Federation for Human Rights reported 709 cases between 2009 and June 2024.

Of these, 471 people eventually returned or were produced in court, 83 were found dead, and 155 remain missing.

At the event, HRSS Secretary General Muniruzzaman presented seven key demands, including Bangladesh's full implementation of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

He urged that families be informed of relatives' whereabouts, each case investigated, perpetrators brought to justice, and victims and witnesses

given protection. He also called for public awareness through textbooks and the media.

Nur Khan Liton, a member of the inquiry commission, said political parties have pledged commitments, but accountability is essential.

"We must ensure that the word 'disappearance' no longer exists in Bangladesh. While we say we have defeated fascism, we must also remove the fascism that lives in our

and false cases.

"Civil society has long demanded this, but political leaders are the ones in power. We want this promise from them."

Huma Khan, chief of mission of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, urged Bangladesh to act urgently to ease families' suffering.

She highlighted three priorities: ensuring victims' families' right to death certificates, property transfers, and bank access;

the need for nationwide consultations with victims and families.

Regarding the reliance on the death penalty, she said, "What is needed is an impartial and efficient justice system."

She appealed to the interim government and the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs to prioritise accountability and meaningful justice over rushed legislation or symbolic punishments.

Political representatives present at the event, including Mahdi Amin of BNP and Advocate Ehsanul Mahbub Zobaer of Jamaat-e-Islami, promised to address enforced disappearances in their election manifestos.

International Crimes Tribunal Prosecutor SM Mainul Karim, Inquiry Commission Member Nabil Idris, Jatiya Nagarik Party's Senior Joint Convenor Ariful Islam Adib, and Nagarik Oikya's General Secretary Shahidullah Kaiser also spoke.

Meanwhile, in a statement yesterday, ASK urged the government to ensure justice, compensation, protection for families and witnesses, and rehabilitation for victims of enforced disappearances. It also called for exemplary punishment for perpetrators and effective steps to prevent such violations in future.

ASK added that these measures are essential not only for victims but also for the safety of society and the rule of law.

SEVEN KEY DEMANDS

- ⦿ Fully implement Int'l Convention for Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
- ⦿ Inform families of whereabouts of disappeared relatives
- ⦿ Investigate each case thoroughly
- ⦿ Bring perpetrators to justice
- ⦿ Ensure protection for victims, witnesses
- ⦿ Raise public awareness through textbooks, the media
- ⦿ Preserve secret detention centres as evidence



DHAKA SATURDAY AUGUST 30, 2025

BHADRA 15, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

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Latif Siddique refuses

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the police to remove the bulletproof jackets, citing discomfort, and the officers complied.

Magistrate Sarah Farzana Haque began the proceedings at 10:55am and later ordered all 16 accused to jail.

As he was being taken back to the lockup of the CMM Court, journalists asked if he had anything to say. Latif shook his head, signalling "no".

Police filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station earlier in the day, accusing Latif and others of inciting terrorism through a speech delivered under the banner of Mancha 71.

The case statement said he conspired to destabilise the country through armed struggle and to overthrow the interim government.

For his speech, people present there surrounded Latif Siddique and others and chanted slogans calling them "Awami fascists", the case statement said. It made 70 to 80 unidentified others accused.

During the hearing, Hafizur said they were victims, not perpetrators.

"I have taught the constitution for 33 years. Yet a conspiracy involving the Liberation War and the constitution is being hatched against me. Yesterday, a mob was created against us, and we were arrested."

He alleged denial of protections under article 33 of the constitution and sought Tk 5 crore in compensation for "physical and mental harm inflicted by the state". Holding up a copy of the constitution, he said, "We will protect the constitution. We will protect the Liberation War."

Journalist Monjurul Alam Panna, another accused, also spoke from the dock. "What crimes have we committed? Why are handcuffs placed on a journalist's wrists? Is it a crime to speak about the Liberation War? Are we criminals?" he asked.

Opposing bail, Additional Public Prosecutor Md Shamsuddoha Sumon told the court the accused attended a roundtable organised by Mancha 71, founded on August 5 -- the anniversary of the Awami

League's ouster.

He alleged the platform's "main objective is to bring [Sheikh] Hasina back" and that the accused "were involved in conspiracies" and had benefitted from the AL in the past. He said 300-400 people had gathered in Bhatara with the same aim, later blockading Shahbagh. He described it as part of a blueprint to sabotage the election, adding that a remand petition would follow.

Latif, Hafizur, and others were detained on Thursday after a group calling itself "July Fighters" disrupted a discussion on "Our Great Liberation War and the Constitution of Bangladesh" organised by Mancha 71 at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

The group tore the banner, confined participants, and handed them over to police.

Organisers said they formed Mancha 71 to prevent distortion of Liberation War history and protect the dignity of freedom fighters, and their event was meant as a peaceful discussion.

Prof Anu Muhammad, former Jahangirnagar University teacher, condemned the incident. "They assaulted freedom fighters, a university teacher, and a journalist -- people who only wanted to speak. Wasn't it for this very right to free expression that we fought against Sheikh Hasina's regime?" he said at a separate programme at Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

He warned against rising mob violence by certain groups to silence thoughts, opinions, and the right to speak. "After such an attack, the government should have filed a case against the attackers. Instead, to our shock, those attacked were charged under the Anti-Terrorism Act and sent to prison, while the attackers -- whose faces are visible in videos -- roam free, preparing for the next wave of mob terror."

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigoshthi in a statement said with the government's boundless silence and indirect support, the scale of mob violence across the country has been increasing day by day.

Greed fuelling new

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gripped the country during this period, fuelled by rampant looting, money laundering, corruption, and politicisation, he said.

"Although the Proclamation of Independence had pledged to establish equality, human dignity, and social justice, people in reality

have been deprived of self-respect and fundamental rights," said the noted jurist.

The

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new opportunity to build a society free from discrimination, founded on democracy and justice,

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