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'A life of wisdom, humility and grace'

Nation bids farewell to Syed Manzoorul Islam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rain fell steadily on Dhaka yesterday, soft and mournful, as friends, students, and admirers gathered to bid farewell to Professor Emeritus Syed Manzoorul Islam. The raindrops mingled with tears, blurring faces and flowers alike, as one of the country's most beloved teachers was laid to rest.

The noted educationist, writer, and former professor of English at Dhaka University was buried at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur after two civic tributes -- one at Dhaka University's Aparajeyo Bangla and another at the Central Shaheed Minar.

His body was brought to the base of Aparajeyo Bangla around 10:30am. Students and teachers stood in silence, their umbrellas unable to hide the grief etched across their faces. Around 11:00am, amid heavy rain, his coffin was taken to the Central Shaheed Minar, where hundreds gathered -- advisers of the interim government, academics, artists, writers, and citizens. They came not just to honour his achievements, but to remember the kindness and integrity that defined his life.

Under the supervision of the Jatiya Kabita Parishad, tributes were paid by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Dhaka University's Department of English, BRAC, Asiatic Society, Bishwo Shahitto Kendro, Bangladesh National Museum, CPB, Jasad, Basad, Chhayanaut,

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Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury lays a wreath at the coffin of Professor Emeritus Syed Manzoorul Islam at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday. Manzoorul was buried at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur after two civic tributes -- one at Dhaka University's Aparajeyo Bangla and another at the Central Shaheed Minar.

PHOTO: STAR

Hope rekindled as DMCH resumes bone marrow unit

TUHIN SHUBHIRA ADHIKARY

When Rejoan Rashid Fahad was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital over a decade ago with non-Hodgkin lymphoma, a form of blood cancer, few believed he would survive.

But he turned out to be one of the fortunate ones. In March 2014, DMCH -- the country's first hospital to introduce the highly sophisticated and costly bone marrow transplant (BMT) procedure -- began offering the treatment.

Fahad became the seventh patient to undergo the transplant in October that year, receiving the procedure at half the fixed cost, which was already far lower than what it would have cost abroad.

He made a full recovery.

Now 30 years old and working in Saudi Arabia for the last five years, Fahad returned to the BMT unit yesterday -- the very day it resumed operations after a long break -- rekindling hope that more patients like him will get a new lease on life through treatment there.

"It's a coincidence. Returning home after a long time, I came here to meet the doctors and nurses who gave me a second life. I am so grateful to them. It feels good to see the unit resume operations. I hope many more people like me will receive treatment here," Fahad told this correspondent.

AT A GLANCE

- Around 1,000 patients need BMT each year
- DMCH can perform 50–60 transplants annually
- Autologous BMT to cost Tk 5–7 lakh; allogeneic Tk 12–15 lakh.
- 60 transplants done so far
- Govt to create fund to support patients' treatment costs
- Training, standardisation seen as key challenge

BMT UNIT RESUMES AFTER LONG SUSPENSION

DMCH authorities said they have begun preparations for transplantation, which is expected to resume within two to three weeks. Among government hospitals, only DMCH has this facility, while a few private hospitals and CMH also offer the service.

Bone marrow transplant is a medical procedure in which damaged or diseased bone marrow -- the soft, spongy tissue inside the bones -- is replaced with healthy stem cells. These stem cells can either come from the patient (autologous transplant) or from a donor (allogeneic transplant).

The treatment can be used for several types of blood cancer, aplastic anaemia, thalassaemia, and other related disorders.

Bangladesh's first BMT unit was established in October 2013 at the new DMCH building, following the model of the US' Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) of Harvard Medical School.

However, the procedure was suspended after the new DMCH building was converted into a dedicated Covid hospital in May 2020, when the pandemic hit the country.

Although the service briefly resumed in 2023, many of the necessary equipment were found to be non-functional, and the higher infection rate led to another suspension, doctors said.

So far, 60 bone marrow transplants have been

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COSMOS FOUNDATION SEMINAR

BNP calls PR party-centric, Jamaat says it reflects people's voice

UNB, Dhaka

Two major political parties -- BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami -- took opposing positions on the proportional representation (PR) system at a discussion in Dhaka yesterday.

Several smaller parties, however, favoured keeping the existing electoral model, saying people have not lost confidence in it, while some suggested introducing the PR system in an "Upper House" to ensure checks and balances.

Leaders of different political parties and experts made the observations at a seminar titled "Election 2026: A Critical Look at Proportional Representation", organised by Cosmos Foundation at the city's Cosmos Centre.

BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury questioned the idea of holding a referendum on introducing the PR system.

"Why should we go for a referendum on PR? Who has given us that responsibility? The people didn't give us this responsibility," he said, adding that discussions can instead take place inside and outside parliament on reform issues like PR.

BNP Presidium Member Abdul Moyeen Khan also opposed the system, saying it would only strengthen political parties while weakening the link between people and their elected representatives.

"People would vote for a party, not an individual, and the party would then decide who becomes a member of parliament. This goes against our democratic spirit, where people elect their own representatives," he said.

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STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS

Accommodation top priority

Says Cucus VP candidate Mahfuzur Rahman

SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK

Mahfuzur Rahman, vice president candidate from the "Shwadhini Shikharthi Shomnilon" panel in the upcoming Chittagong University Central Students' Union (Cucus) election, has said that if elected, he will work to ensure a safe and inclusive campus for all students, including women.

In an interview with The Daily Star, the former coordinator of Students Against Discrimination said that ever since his admission to the university, he has witnessed a conventional and hierarchical pattern in student politics where a few leaders became dominant figures. "They decided who would get seats, who would be evicted, even who could enter the campus," he said.

Mahfuzur, who is currently studying master's in Arabic, said from the beginning, he has stood by the students and spoken for their rights. "I led from the front during the uprising and continued my fight afterwards. I have always tried to stand

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Will serve students, not any party

Pledges Cucus GS candidate Sayeed Bin Habib

SHARIF M SHAFIQUE

Sayeed Bin Habib, the candidate for general secretary from the Islami Chhatra Shibir-supported panel in the upcoming Cucus election, has pledged that if elected, he will work solely as a representative of the students, not for any political organisation.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Sayeed, a student of the History department (2019-20 session), said, "If I win, I'll work to fulfil students' expectations and protect their rights. Cucus will not be used to serve any party's agenda. I'll keep it free from political influence."

He said holding the Cucus election after 36 years is a major achievement for post-July Bangladesh. "We can now dream of student-union-based politics. We want the Cucus election to be part of the university's academic calendar," he added.

Sayeed, who is also the Literature and Human Rights Secretary of Chhatra Shibir's CU unit, described his panel "Sompritir Shikharthi Jote" as inclusive.

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QUOTES OF THE DAY



If anyone creates chaos on polling day, shut down the centre. On that day, you (presiding officers) are the chief officer..., you are legally omnipotent.

AMM NASIR UDDIN
Chief Election Commissioner



India has always tried to put us in trouble... We want friendship with India, but it must be on equal terms, without interference in our internal affairs.

MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR
BNP Secretary General



One or two advisers and officials are secretly conspiring to bring a particular party to power. They seem to be under some kind of pressure.

MIA GOLAM PORWAR
Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General

Honouring the voices that keep Nazrul's legacy alive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ninth anniversary of Gems of Nazrul was celebrated with a musical event titled "Nirjharini" at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

The programme, held under the banner "Adi Shur Mancha", began with a group performance of the Nazrul Sangeet "Ghumonto Bonobhumi Rum Jhum K Bajay".

As part of the celebration, eminent Nazrul researcher Professor Dr Nashid Kamal and renowned violinist Sunil Chandra Das were honoured for their outstanding contributions to Nazrul Sangeet.

Dalia Nausheen presented them with flowers.

Nashid Kamal is not only an accomplished artiste but also a dedicated researcher. She has translated seven books, including Nazrul's

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Eminent Nazrul researcher Professor Nashid Kamal and renowned violinist Sunil Chandra Das were honoured for their outstanding contributions to Nazrul Sangeet at a musical event marking ninth anniversary of Gems of Nazrul at the capital's The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED