

Tribute paid to 1971 war heroes in Ctg CCC accords reception to 110 freedom fighters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Chattogram*

People from all walks of life in Chattogram paid tribute to the martyrs who laid down their lives for the motherland, marking Victory Day.

The observances began at sunrise yesterday with a 31-gun salute at the Liberation War Memorial.

Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) Mayor Shahadat Hossain was the first to lay a wreath at the martyr's monument.

He was followed by divisional and city dignitaries, including Divisional Commissioner Dr Md Ziauddin, Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Zahidul Islam Mia, Chattogram Metropolitan Police Commissioner Hasib Aziz, Chattogram Range DIG Md Ahsan Habib Palash, and Chattogram Superintendent of Police Md Nazir Ahmed Khan.

The freedom fighters risked their lives to free the country. To protect the sovereignty of this independent nation, everyone must remain united.

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN, CCC Mayor

Later, people from various segments of society paid their respects by placing flowers at the monument. Attendees carried banners, placards, and the red-and-green flag of Bangladesh, uniting in a single confluence of respect. Freedom fighters and representatives from political parties, social, and cultural organisations also offered their tributes.

In the morning, the city corporation organised a reception ceremony at the Theatre Institute Chattogram to honour 110 freedom fighters currently living in the district.

Mayor Shahadat Hossain handed over crests, certificates of honour, and financial stipends to freedom fighters and the families of those who sacrificed their lives in the 1971 Liberation War.

In his address as the chief guest, Mayor Shahadat said, "The valiant freedom fighters are the nation's finest children. We attained an independent Bangladesh through their sacrifice. We are proud and delighted to host this reception today."

"The Liberation War of 1971 was fought with a dream of establishing equality, justice, human dignity, and democracy. The freedom fighters never thought of stipends or personal gain. They risked their lives to free the country. To protect the sovereignty of this independent nation, everyone must remain united."



PHOTO: STAR

Illegal brick kilns run in Bandarban despite ban

MONG SING HAI MARMA

Despite government restrictions, a clear High Court directive, and repeated raids by the district administration and the Department of Environment, furnaces of illegal brick kilns in Bandarban flare back to life soon after enforcement teams leave after conducting drives.

Locals alleged new brick kilns are still being run by cutting hills and burning forest wood as fuel, ignoring the ban.

The DoE said some illegal kiln owners have even attempted to attack government inspection teams.

According to the DoE office, a total of 70 brick kilns operate in Bandarban.

All 11 kilns in Bandarban Sadar, one in Ruma, seven in Naikongchhari and 11 in Lama upazilas are currently shut down, but the rest are actively operational.

Md Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, DoE assistant director in Bandarban, said construction of illegal kilns, furnace preparation and raw brick-making have been going on secretly despite their drives.

Since July this year, seven mobile court drives led by the environmental court and the special magistrate's court in Lama's Faitong area fined 21 kilns a total of Tk 29.10 lakh, filed three cases and demolished eight illegal kilns, he added.

"However, the moment we leave, they resume operations," he said.

"We don't have our own manpower. We have to form teams comprising the district administration, UNOs, police and fire service. Drives often get delayed when supporting agencies are unavailable," the official added.

Bandarban Deputy Commissioner Shamim Ara Rini said all brick kilns in the hills are illegal as per the HC directive.



She said all UNOs have been directed to conduct immediate drives whenever they receive information that a kiln has restarted.

During a recent visit to Thanchi upazila, a brick kiln was found operating along the Thanchi-Alikadam road, just 500 metres from the upazila headquarters. The UNO office, two government institutions, including

a school, a Buddhist temple and an indigenous community's village, are located nearby.

Several students said the kiln's furnace had been burning for a week. Smoke continuously enters classrooms through windows, while dust from frequent truck movement also disrupts the academic environment, they added.

Chaw Shoi U Marma, headteacher of Mogk Para Government Primary School, said they raised the issue with the upazila education officer when the kiln started operating 10-12 years ago.

"No steps were taken. For the sake of our academic environment and students' health, shutting this kiln is essential," he said.

Local resident Aoung shoi U Marma, 60, said the smoke and dust have made daily life difficult.

Md Sarwar, manager of the brick kiln in Thanchi, said its owner, Md Sujon of Bandarban, went into hiding after the August 5 changeover last year.

His younger brother, Md Mehedi, instructed him to resume operations last week, he said. "I cannot say for sure whether the administration has given any approval."

Thanchi UNO Md Abdullah Al Foishal said the DoE has been informed about the illegal kiln and action will follow soon.

Parked bus catches fire in Cox's Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

A bus caught fire while parked at a bus counter near the Police Lines, adjacent to the Cox's Bazar bus terminal, yesterday.



The fire broke out around 11:45am, triggering panic among locals and passers-by. Fire Service personnel rushed to the spot upon receiving the alert and managed to bring the blaze under control.

Mohammad Tanharul Islam, deputy assistant director of Cox's Bazar Fire Service and Civil Defence, confirmed the incident and said the cause of the fire

could not be determined immediately.

An investigation will be conducted to ascertain how the fire started, he added.

Cox's Bazar Sadar Model Police Station Officer in Charge Sami Uddin said no casualties were reported. The driver was not inside the bus belonging to Doel Express at that time, and the helper, who was listening to music inside it, managed to get off, he added.

The fire is believed to have started accidentally, said the OC. Although the exact cause remains unclear, some eyewitnesses speculated that the fire may have originated from a cigarette.

Students observe Victory Day

FROM PAGE 3

At DU, a group of students hurled shoes at a photograph of Ghulam Azam, former ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami and a convicted war criminal, in front of the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) building around 1:30pm. The students also chanted slogans denouncing collaborators of the Pakistani occupation forces during the 1971 Liberation War.

Speaking at the gathering, one student said Gulam Azam and other Jamaat leaders had opposed Bangladesh's Liberation War, while their ideological successors are now portraying the war as an "Indian conspiracy".

"We have seen that this year the razakars have been portraying themselves as sons of the soil. We reject this with hatred," he added.

At JnU, a similar programme was held at the sculpture square on the campus around 12:30pm, where students threw shoes at symbolic images and chanted anti-Pakistani and anti-razakar slogans.

Asif Hossain, a student of JnU's philosophy department, said, "Students were prevented by the university authorities from drawing and trampling the Pakistani flag as a mark of protest. Today's programme was organised in response."

Earlier on Monday night, tension flared on JnU campus over the allegation. In protest, leaders and activists of the JnU unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal staged an overnight blockade of the vice chancellor's vehicle, witnesses said.

At JU, students from the drama and dramatics department threw garbage at an installation in front of the Old Arts Building named "Ghrinasthambha" (pillar

of hatred), which depicted portraits of convicted war criminals Gulam Azam, Quader Molla and Motiur Rahman Nizami. The demonstration was held in protest against attempts to portray war collaborators -- razakar, Al-Badr and Al-Shams -- as "heroes", said organisers.

Muntasir Billah Khan, a student of the department and general secretary of the Al Beruni Hall unit of the JU students' council, said those who opposed the Liberation War have no place in the country.

Meanwhile, at CU, portraits of Gulam Azam and the university's vice-chancellor (academic) Prof Shamim Uddin Khan were drawn on the walkway in front of the administrative building on Monday. However, yesterday morning, those were found painted over in black.

A student wishing anonymity said that they had painted the portraits as a symbolic protest against derogatory remarks on martyred intellectuals made by the pro-VC and to press home their demand for his resignation.

Abdullah Al Noman, general secretary of CU unit of JCD, said those who did not uphold the spirit of the Liberation War and "sided with razakars" were responsible for smearing the portraits with black paint.

At RU, JCD staged a shoe-hurling programme targeting symbolic representations of razakars, Al-Badr and Al-Shams on the Shaheed Buddhiji Memorial premises in the afternoon.

At RU, JCD president Sultan Ahmed Rahi said the collaborators of Pakistani forces were behind "the most despicable chapter" in Bangladesh's history. "Even today, those engaged in pro-Pakistan politics are

Dolphin deaths in Halda river spark alarm Experts warn extinction of species

ARUN BIKAS DEY, *Ctg*

The body of a dead dolphin, weighing 73.3kg and measuring 196cm, was recovered by Naval Police yesterday morning after it was found floating in the Halda river, Chattogram's natural fish breeding ground, in the Barighona area of Hathazari upazila.

Ramzan Ali, sub-inspector of Halda Naval Police Outpost, said the dolphin had died a few days earlier, adding that its body was decomposed and bloated.

The carcass was later sent to Chittagong University's Halda River Research Centre for examination and autopsy. Officials of the centre said a total of four dead dolphins have been recovered from the Halda this year.

"Halda's Gangetic dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) population is facing an alarming threat from human activities in the river," said Dr Manjurul Kibria, coordinator of the centre and a professor of zoology.

"The dead dolphin's body bore two injury marks, likely sustained from an illegal engine boat's propeller or from a fishing net," he added.

Kibria identified three primary reasons for the rising number of dolphin deaths in the Halda: motor boat propeller strikes or other injuries, entanglement in nets and illegal hunting.

According to the centre's data, a total of 48 dead dolphins have so far been recovered from the Halda since September 2017.



"A dolphin lives an average of 25 years but takes around 10 years to reach maturity. An adult dolphin takes about two years to give birth to a single calf," Kibria said, warning that the dolphin death rate currently far outpaces their reproductive rate. "If proper, timely action is not taken, they will be extinct from the river in the near future," he added.

Kibria said dolphins, a third-tier animal in the food chain, are a vital indicator of a river ecosystem's health, and their conservation is critical to the survival of other endangered aquatic species like turtles, gharials and otters. He demanded that Halda be declared a dolphin sanctuary immediately.

A 2023 census conducted by the centre found a total of 172 endangered Gangetic dolphins in Halda, while their global population is estimated at about 1,100 only, Kibria said.

In 2019, the Forest Department formulated the Dolphin Conservation Action Plan for protecting Gangetic and Irrawaddy dolphins.

The plan, prepared by its national consultant Dr Muhammad Abdul Aziz, also a professor of Zoology at Jahangirnagar University, identified 25 critical habitats, including between Madunaghat and Sattarghat areas of the Halda river, and at the Natun Bridge area in the Halda estuary, as two very important dolphin habitats.

The report said protecting Gangetic dolphins is essential for the health of the riverine ecosystem and benefits millions of local communities dependent on the river.

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01	a) Security Plain Paper Color: Light Yellow, Rag: 65±10% Size: 216mm×343mm (8.50"×13.50") GSM: 95±5% (As per schedule) Invitation Reference No. 05.85.0000. 009.04.010.25/11, Date: 14.12.2025	BSO-3/25-26	1193575	17-Dec-2025 15:00	27-Jan-2026 15:00	28-Jan-2026 15:00

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